

I hold with those who favor fire
by conversingraven

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Summary: Three years after DV. No war. Max turned to the other factions to stop Jeanine from taking the situation with the Divergent too far. He did not want Dauntless to become something they were not, and wanted things to remain the same. The other factions agreed and kept the two factions on a sort of probation in the years following. Aptitude tests are all entered manually... Read more

1. Chapter 1

Three years after DV. No war. Max turned to the other factions to stop Jeanine from taking the situation with the Divergent too far. He did not want Dauntless to become something they were not, and wanted things to remain the same. The other factions agreed and kept the two factions on a sort of probation in the years following. Aptitude tests are all entered manually, enabling Divergents to hide their results, so they are not subject to ridicule. Things changed among all factions, but Abnegation and Erudite still shared indifference. The system was still rocky but had gotten better in recent years. Initiation at 18 not 16.

Natalia's father, Calvin Stephenson, is a Candor leader. Her older brother William had died when she was fifteen, he had been eighteen and was only three months away from taking his aptitude test. Their mother, Jamie Lynn, had been Jeanine Matthews twin sister. She had transferred with Calvin from Erudite. She died giving birth to Natalia. Since her brother had died, Natalia had changed completely, becoming closer than ever to her cousin Matthew (Jeanine's son) who was only a week younger than her. There's much more to the story, so read and find out! (Eric/OC eventually)

2. Chapter 2

** Sorry if it starts off slow, I've never done this before and I am trying to set it up so it makes sense. Please leave feedback (good or bad) so I can fix things and learn from any mistakes! Eric/OC

eventually... **

Natalia woke up startled and disoriented, the clock read 0441. She slowly rose, knowing that she wouldn't be able to fall back asleep. The nightmares weren't as frequent as they used to be, but when they did happen they were always awful, and normally prevented her from continuing her sleep. She reached under her bed and pulled up the loose floorboard and grabbed her pills; how grateful she was to have them. She hated that she had to take them, but it was necessary for now. She only took the one for the anxiety and at night for insomnia; she had stopped taking the others months before.

She decided to go for a run; she tried to go in the early evenings. Running always helped her forget about the things other than the nightmares that kept being her up at night. Forget about Candor, and how much she hated it.

Forget about Jeanine Matthews and the expectation that she would be her after initiation along with her cousin Matthew. Forget about the hatred she had for the constant control that everyone seemed to have over her. Forget about the pills she used to take in order to keep her shit together. Forget about that terrible day; the day she lost her older brother William.

She missed him more than anything in the world. They had been best friends; she had been his entire world, and he had been his. She spent the last two years of his life around him almost 24/7. She became friends with his crazy group of friends, and they treated her like she belonged. Only three of them had been in Candor, but it had been easy for them all to sneak out and spend time together when they weren't supposed to.

Her father always knew they snuck out; he didn't care much for her, but he would have let William get away with anything but murder. She missed the group and the fun times they had. People had always thought their group's relationship was odd, given that they were all expected to be in separate factions, but none of them cared. They wanted to enjoy their lives before they had to accept the responsibilities they would have after initiation. Not that it mattered all that much now; he died only six months before his initiation ceremony.

Everyone assumed she went running so often because she wanted to be healthy, ready for Erudite and the strict and demanding hours that being a faction leader had, but she just wanted to forget.

She had felt a little bitter in the previous weeks over her future, since that Erudite jackass Richard had expressed his distaste for the attention she and her cousin received. She hadn't given much thought until that moment, that everything was mapped out for her. In a sense, she was privileged for having the attention, even if she barely spoke to Jeanine. But for some reason, it gave her a strange taste in her mouth to have everything so planned out.

She slipped on her white and black running clothes, and her white tennis shoes that she considered highly illogical since she they dirtied so easily. She stretched, not as long as she should have, though. She was being impatient and headed out the door.

She didn't worry about her father hearing her leave; she would be

surprised if he was even home. Being a Candor leader he often stayed at the office for days on end. She didn't care; they barely talked anyways. They had never been close and after her brother had died they never bothered to pretend like they got along.

A few weeks after his death she had lost her temper with him, and it resulted in violence. If she were honest, she thought he hated her. He had never actually said, "I hate you," and she had never returned the thought either, but there are some things you just know.

He had said other things in the past, terrible things. She had returned them, but in the previous year, they'd barely spoken. Plus, the way he acted gave his feelings on his daughter away clearly. Others thought that they just chose not to be sentimental in public, she didn't quite care what they thought, though. As long as she didn't ask him, didn't bring it up, neither of them would speak of it honestly.

That was the funny thing about Candor, they thrive on honesty and value the truth, yet most those in leadership roles did not speak of things they thought weren't important unless directly asked. It was one of the reasons she gave up considering that she would stay in Candor when she was a child. That, and of course the fact that she knew William wouldn't stay.

She flipped on her light and began to jog. She usually took the same exact route, a safe route that took her approximately 5.5 miles and stayed in only the Candor sector. It was lit up and passed by homes and buildings.

Today she felt the need to stray off the beaten path, to let her mind wander. She normally avoided the factionless area between Candor and Abnegation, so she veered toward the area on the opposite side, about ten miles from where Erudite's main labs and libraries were. There was a risk of running into some factionless, but a much less likely chance.

She was to take her aptitude test later on that day, and she was beyond nervous. She was only seventeen, but since her eighteenth birthday was during the initiation period, they allowed her to be considered an adult early. If she was honest; she was scared. She detested being honest! She hated Candor. She preferred having secrets; it kept things interesting and people out of her business. Constantly being forced into the truth had given her a bitter taste in her mouth.

Erudite.. Maybe she would be happy there. Not many people knew that Jeanine had been her mother, Jami-Lynn's sister. Jamie-Lynn and her father had both transferred to Candor from Erudite. She had died giving birth to her, so they all had an odd relationship to one another. It was rarely spoken about in Candor, which was rare considering the members of Candor never seemed to stop talking.

In Erudite, it probably would be long forgotten if she hadn't remained close to Matthew, especially in the two years since William died.

Not only was Matthew's birthday was during initiation as well, but they were only a week apart since she was born prematurely at seven weeks. They looked so much alike that any time she was around them it

was hard for people not to take note of it. They both had blonde hair and bright blue eyes, sharp features and athletic figures. Natalia had always wished she knew what her mother looked like; she had to have been the spitting image of her sister.

Jeanine and she didn't actually speak that much, she was a busy woman, as most leaders were. However she knew Jeanine was the reason she was in the complex courses in school with the Erudite students, why she was given extra privileges to visit Erudite, why she was able to be around Matthew and Anthony so much, and why the rumors of her following in her aunts footsteps spread through both of their factions.

She was taught to play the piano (her brother taught her how to play the guitar, he had learned from one of his best friends, a Dauntless-born named Michael), to speak French (an old language, and not well), among so many other things.

Jeanine was a proud person; appearances meant everything to her. It made sense that her niece and her son had to be the best of the best, so no one questioned the extra attention she was paid. Her father looked the other way; she knew he told the other Candor leaders knew there was no point in trying to instill an honest way if she was just going to leave them. Plus she rarely saw them, so she never mentioned that her father still forced it on her, nor that he didn't care at all.

It would be such a huge relief to leave, but she still worried she would hate Erudite like Benson did. Benson had been one of William's best friends, maybe even more than that. She never had the chance to ask them since he had transferred from Candor to Erudite three years prior. No one would ever replace William, but they were like a brother to her all the same. Just like the rest of their posse. She hadn't spoken to most of them in years.

These were her many thoughts as she jogged, finally stopping to stretch again, feeling her calf's beginning to burn for not stretching enough beforehand. She let her mind wander as she stretched, thinking about the different factions and what her life might be like after the next day.

Candor is the leaders of the law, establishing justice and the responsibilities that came with honesty in all things. The problem other factions had with Candor is they are brutally honest, they lack any senses of respect or self-preservation and are rude to other factions, and each other. They tell it how it is, and of course, those who are in the faction don't mind. If everyone knows all of your secrets there is no point in lying, you have nothing to hide.

Erudite was the opposite, they respected politeness and thought it showed a sense of intelligence. They valued knowledge and live their lives in pursuit of knowledge and worked in labs as scientists, teachers, doctors, and most other jobs that required a quick wit.

She was relatively quiet for a Candor; it never bothered most people since they knew the high likelihood of her being Erudite. She had a few friends, just not many. She was too close to Matthew, and spent most of her time with him and his few friends, Anthony being his

closest. She was fine with it, though. not valuing Candor's honesty to it's fullest. In her strongest opinion, she figured that perhaps the reason we are made to keep thoughts inside, is because they are meant to be inside. They aren't meant to be released without caution.

She enjoyed to read and study, and she never struggled in school because things just seemed easy to her. She remembered things easily and could analyze situations easily. She read body language well because of her teachings in Candor, so the mix of the two gave her keen ability to adapt to any situation and would make her a strong leader someday, at least that is what Jeanine told her.

She began to jog again, her mind running as fast as her blood.

Dauntless, where William would have gone. She had always admired him for wanting to go there. Dauntless were in charge of the security of all factions, protecting the fence lines as well as the areas the factionless lived. They were a brutal faction, and before the problems with Erudite's search for Divergent was brought to an end in years previous they had cuts on their initiation.

The two factions were still monitored closely by the others but had gained a large amount of trust over the past few years. She knew more than most about the initiation programs because she spent so much time with Matthew and was favored by her teachers and the leadership in Erudite. She had learned that since the problems the Dauntless had dwindling numbers staying in or transferring to the faction. They didn't cut joining members unless necessary. They still had a cut-throat program that consisted of three training sections that were ranked. She thought highly of the faction, as many did since Max was the one who reported the problems with Erudite searching for Divergent.

She laughed to herself as she thought of amity, there would be no possible way she could be an amity! Those hippies were always happy. Too happy. And to work on a farm? No, thank you! The funny part is that her best friend would be transferring to Amity, Nolan. Abnegation; the selfless who ran the government. She couldn't even imagine spending life in Abnegation! She was far to selfish to even consider such an idea.

Natalia was consumed in her thoughts, as she normally was on her runs. She turned a sharp corner she ran into something solid with a thud, falling over. "Oomph!" She looked up to see that the object she had run into was actually a man. A tall and very well built man. She stood slowly as he looked her up and down, it was dark enough that she could only tell that he was wearing black and had two maze-like tattoos poking out of his collar.

Her eyes widened as she took a step back, he was obviously a Dauntless member, and the tattoos were those of a superior, possibly a leader. Shit! She tried to think back to when she had met the leaders of Dauntless, remembering little.

"What the hell is a little Candor-girl like yourself doing out and about so early?" he snapped loudly. She remained silent and glanced down, having no idea how to reply. God-dammit, why couldn't she think straight? She didn't want to deal with this today. She gulped and

looked up at him, opening her mouth to reply, but nothing came out. Lord was he intimidating! She saw his smirk, "what's wrong? You don't seem to be scared of running in the dark; you can't possibly be afraid of me?" he replied and stepped toward her.

After a moment, her mind began to run, and she felt her heartbeat pumping rapidly. From the adrenaline from the run or the confrontation, she didn't know. All she knew was that she really REALLY didn't want to deal with this now. She hadn't been trying to cause trouble she just wanted to clear her head. She felt herself getting frustrated. She had her test today, and this would complicate matters with her father if this man did anything about her breaking curfew.

The man took another step toward her, "maybe you are scared, or are you brain-dead?" he asked, smirk fading. She finally responded, her words coming out clearly and demanding, "Why do you care?" and stepped around him.

Where had the hell that come from? She was beyond shocked that she had spoken like that, and even more shocked that he didn't reply or stop her. She glanced back to see him staring at her; it was too dark to see his expression. She turned and began to jog again, wanting to get as far away from that possibility as she could.

She picked up her pace, just in case he decided to do something about it. Seriously, where the hell did that come from? Glancing at her running watch, she realized the sun would be up soon. She headed back towards her home to get ready for the long day she had ahead.

3. Chapter 3

She walked through the noisy hallways of the largest building in Candor toward her father's office. She had no clue why she'd been called there, what could he possibly want? She hadn't seemed him in days, nor did she intend on seeing him until the choosing ceremony the following day. With only an hour until her test too! She walked quickly, her heels clicking on the marble floors.

God did she detest heels! Her father insisted that it was professional, most of the females wore them for work. Some of the girls still in school were expected to wear them, and she was one of them. It bothered her; they didn't think politeness was necessary but looking presentable was? It was just silly, and of course, once she was in Erudite she knew that Jeanine would expect it most of the time too. Erudite prided themselves on politeness and looking professional, as it was a form of intelligence to show such respect.

As she reached the counter where her father's assistant was she was told he was in a conference room on the top floor. She jogged toward the elevator pushing the button multiple times, impatiently waiting for the doors to open. She considered that he might want to speak to her run this morning since had reprimanded her the previous month for running during hours that were not deemed "safe." She shrugged off the thought, as it was an unnecessary conversation to have considering she would be leaving the next day.

"Oi, Natalia! Wait up!" She turned to see her good friend Nolan

jogging toward her. "You're walking the wrong way, our tests are in the building next door. The elevator doesn't go to the bottom floor!" She sighed and explained that her father had asked to see her before her test, and told him she would walk with him after. He took that as an invitation to follow her upstairs.

They continued in silence when on the elevator, she could tell he was nervous since Nolan was always talking. He was also always so happy. He apparently noticed that she felt nervous too, as they neared the top floor he looked at her and asked, "how can you tell if someone is going to be Erudite?"

What an odd question, she smiled and replied, "Nolan you aren't worried that you aren't amity are you? You know you are, and you have a choice in the matter." He laughed nervously, "I suppose you are right, but it must be easy for you.. you know you are meant to be in Euridice", he told her as they stepped off the elevator. She stopped suddenly, annoyed at first with the thought that it was easy for her, she knew he didn't mean it in a bad way though. That was impossible for him.

She had always enjoyed Nolan's company, he was kind hearted and, he didn't ask her questions. He enjoyed to talk anyways so their friendship blossomed in large part to that. He compensated for some of the qualities she didn't have. Although she could never be amity she, didn't want him to be nervous for something she thought he was destined for. They had been intimate a few times, but it never sparked into more than their friendship. She was grateful to have him in her life.

She remembered what she had read in a book when researching her anxiety, that distracting someone could help ease nervousness and panic. She almost laughed in thinking of the phrase "laughter is the best medicine." She turned to him with the cheesiest smile she could muster and replied, "do you really want to know how? Matthew told me how he thinks they test for Erudite" He grinned cheerily and nodded.

"I want you to do something for me." he nodded again. She pointed to the right with both of her thumbs while saying "I need you to look left for me."

He looked to the right. She couldn't help but laugh as he came to the realization that he had looked the wrong way. He joined her in laughing and put his arm around her as they walked toward the conference rooms at the end of the long hallway. "You know, you're kind of great when you aren't being so serious Talia!" he told her. "I'm going to miss you." She pushed him away and rolled her eyes, oh yes, she would definitely miss Nolan. He was the only one she knew well enough that would laugh at such an awful and terrible joke.

She walked to the main desk for the largest conference room. "Hello Ben, where is my father?" she asked one of the assistants for the floor. He looked up at her from the desk and replied "in a faction meeting, he just wanted you to sign these forms. They are for your medications to be transferred to your future faction."

She didn't bother containing her annoyance, she hadn't even taken the test yet for gods sake! "This really couldn't have been done later? What meeting, the factions are all preparing for initiations." She

mentally smacked herself; she knew better than to be curious, it just left people open to asking her questions that she hated to answer. Ben looked up to reply as she moved the forms to a lower counter blocked from his view. She bent over to sign them, but he had stopped his reply when the door to the largest conference room opened.

She quickly handed him back the forms and began to walk away as leaders dressed in all different colors excited the room. She stopped and stood straight as she saw her father emerge with Jack, another leader of Candor with Jeanine and her assistant Jeremy in tow. She considered running toward the elevator; Jack could be nosy. With Nolan next to her she didn't bother. He would just slow her down, and he always had to make a point of talking to people, hell, she would probably have to drag him away.

"Hello father," she spoke courtly, standing straight. He replied to her quickly, "Natalia, I thought you would have already been gone. Your test is soon so you should hurry that way." She felt her jaw clench, of course, that was it; she didn't expect more.

Why did she feel a sharp pang in her chest? She began to turn, reaching to drag Nolan away but was distracted when she heard a high but firm voice. "Natalia! How are you today, I'm sure you are beyond excited that this day has finally come! Now I haven't met your friend here," Jeanine spoke to her yet looked at him.

She looked at Jeanine directly, noting that her assistant Jonathan and another leader Rosanne were right behind her, as always. She replied firmly and professionally as she normally did when speaking to the Erudite leaders. Perhaps that is why her father hated her, because he conveyed every emotion possible on his face when speaking and never bothered to be polite to other leaders. "This is Nolan Bright. Nolan meet Jeanine Matthews."

She didn't bother answering the other question, she didn't know why people bothered asking her how she was if they really didn't care. Maybe she didn't agree with the full amount of politeness after all, but just respect? Or maybe she was just annoyed from functioning on such little sleep.

She watched Jeanine shake Nolan's hand; he smiled at her "It is really great to meet you, I am beyond excited to take my test today!" Of course, he was, he was excited about everything, like a freaking puppy. "I can't believe this day has finally come!"

Jeanine looked at him and glanced back to Natalia. Natalia wondered if it was because she was curious as to why she might be friends with someone who was so happy, when Natalia normally was not, or because she somehow knew that at one point Nolan and she had attempted to be more than friends. Matthew could have easily told her, although Natalia didn't believe that he would have. He wasn't as close to his mother as most thought; Jeanine was far too busy.

As if that mattered, though, Jeanine should be used to such things; the rumor was that Erudite was the most curious faction. And by rumor, she meant she knew it was a fact because she spent more time with the Erudite kids in recent years than the Candor.

The crowd of leaders in the hallway grew as did the noise from the conversations. Natalia noticed that Nolan was glancing at the amity

leaders who were speaking to the Abnegation as he listened to Jeanine explain to him about the importance of the aptitude test and how this was "such an important day in their lives."

She stopped listening as she noticed the factions speaking to one another respectfully. Things had been better in recent years as the factions were finally beginning to get along with one another. Erudite was no longer hunting Divergents due to Max, the lead Dauntless leader putting his foot down in the matter, no longer wishing to be run by Erudite. The other factions were notified of the testing and Jeanine's strive for control, and both factions had been on a sort of probation ever since.

"I hope that you have an idea of what your test results may be. It is enlightening to know that most people already know what faction they belong in well before taking their aptitude test." She smiled at Nolan, about to say more but was interrupted by Natalia's father, "they should go so they aren't late Jeanine." Jeanine nodded to him, her eyes are not matching her smile. She rarely saw her aunt and father converse.

As they turned to leave Natalia realized a man standing with the Dauntless leaders was staring at her. Well, glaring was a better word for it. She recognized him as the same man she had run into that morning; in the light, he looked even more intimidating. She watched as his eyes glanced back and forth between her and the people she had been conversing with.

She knew who he was, but had only seen him a few times. Probably why she hadn't recognized him in the dark. He was a Dauntless leader; the youngest one they had ever had. She didn't remember his name but knew that he had been the one that Jeanine worked with in Dauntless when she was researching for the Divergent. That would explain why he was giving quite an awful look toward her aunt, or perhaps he was as ruthless and nasty as the rumors said.

She looked at him with the same expression she had given her father, quickly noting the eyebrow piercings, large black earlobe piercings, and lip piercing. She saw now that the tattoos peeking out of his collar were the ones that marked him as a leader. His sleeves were rolled to his upper wrists, and she saw that arms were covered as well; she doubted that they didn't continue under the rest of his clothing.

She glanced back to his eyes, regretting it instantly. She was almost positive that he could burn a hole through someone with this dark eyes. She clenched her jaw again, such a bad habit. Quickly saying goodbye she turned toward the elevator. She heard Nolan tell them that he enjoyed meeting them and jogged after her. He smiled to her as they got in the elevator, mentioning that they had been friends too long for him not to have met Jeanine until that moment. She returned his smile and answered shortly as always. She couldn't shake the thoughts of the intimidating Dauntless leader who had just looked at her as if he could see her soul.

4. Chapter 4 (Eric's POV)

****Eric's POV! ** please leave feedback, as I mentioned before I have never done this before! ******

Eric was tired, annoyed, and pissed off. Jackson and Chris had been driving him crazy for weeks. Andrea hadn't been as bad, but near it. He hated initiation and hated that it was only a few days away. There was always too many meetings beforehand, during, and he hated the naive little initiates. It wouldn't be so bad if he worked with only the Dauntless born, but Max made him help with both.

It was far too early for him to be going to a meeting. It didn't start for another two hours, yet he had been raised before the fucking sun was even up.

At least the leadership meeting was in Candor and not Erudite. He hated visiting Erudite. The likelihood of running into his older brother Richard, or his sister Maribeth was too high. Richard was eight years older and an absolute prick. Maribeth was eleven years older and nearly as bad.

His parents, however, locked themselves away in the top secret labs in the main Erudite building, he hadn't seen them since the year after he transferred but he knew that they didn't quite care for him anyways.

Not that he wanted to speak to them. His family hated him. He hated them for hating him. And he hated them for being them. Mostly because they reminded him of who he was. He would never be able to change himself enough, even if he hadn't spoken to his them in over three years.

They all were as bad as Jeanine, power-hungry, vain, and although they were smart, they thought everyone who wasn't was dirt beneath their shoes. He hadn't spoken to Jeanine more than a sentence or two in the past year, not only because he wasn't allowed (an unspoken rule by Max) but because he didn't want to.

Eric was no saint, not even close, but he had been trying to cut back being a complete asshole during the past couple of years. He had been given a second chance by Max, so he had to try. The day that Max had told him he wanted to go to the other factions about Jeanine's drive for power and hunt for the Divergent, he had felt a surprising sense of relief.

He didn't want to be the type of man that everyone hated. The power hungry bastard that was feared. He had a few select friends, but that was about it. He thought that he didn't deserve more anyways. Not with the way he had treated people in the past. He deserved to suffer.

He had believed in every word Jeanine had told him. He would have done anything to prove himself to her. Why? Fuck. Why!? Why had he let himself be so stupid? To follow such a power-hungry bitch to all ends? Of course, he knew why. He just hated himself for it.

He had wanted his family to stop treating him like he was dirt on the bottom of their shoes for having an aptitude for Dauntless. The day he had found out nearly crushed him. He was brilliant, beyond brilliant. Richard had always been jealous of Jeanine's attention to him, the rumor when he had still been in Erudite is that he would be alongside Jeanine's son Matthew in being of Erudite's next generation of leaders. It was no surprise that he was the youngest Dauntless

leader ever, or in any faction for that matter.

Matthew was years younger than him, but at the time they had been testing at the same levels, and beyond every person within ten years of them. Now that Eric was thinking about it, Matthew was supposed to choose this year. He wondered if he turned out to be as awful as his mother was. He hoped not, Matthew had seemed like he had a different set of brains than his mother.

Every time Eric thought about his old faction and his old life he felt bile in his throat. He had been a terrible person because of his need to please them. The day of his test he went to speak to Jeanine immediately. She told him that it was unexpected, but he should trust the test. Then she told him that he would still be a valuable asset to her while he was in Dauntless.

He had been so happy when hearing her tell him that. He had been naive and blinded by the jealousy of his older siblings success in Erudite. He wanted that. He wanted to be the best of the best, and he wouldn't have stopped until he was. Jeanine convinced him to see his transfer as a blessing, not a curse. So he did. He was thankful for only that aspect of Jeanine's wisdom.

Eric hopped off the train somewhere between the Erudite and Candor sectors, he could have stayed on longer, but since he was running early he felt that a short walk wouldn't hurt. He walked for a few minutes past the dark buildings, needing no light to see. He had Eleven fears, but the dark wasn't one of them.

"Oomph!" something small and solid had quickly rounded a corner and ran into him. What the fuck? Eric looked to see that the object that had run into him was a girl dressed in black and white, she had fallen on the ground and was looking up at him intently. He narrowed his eyes at her, not just to intimidate her but because he could barely see her.

He folded his arms as she slowly rose, he could see her eyes looking him up and down and finally setting on the leadership tattoos he had opted to put on his neck. It had been painful as shit, but he had wanted them in a location everyone could see. She must have realized he was Dauntless because he saw the whites of her eyes widen. He wished he had brought a light.

He couldn't tell if she was old enough to be a full Candor member or not, only that the curve of her body told him that she was in shape, and her hair was light. Now that she was standing straight he noted that she had to have been around 5'5, maybe 5'6.

"What the hell is a little Candor-girl like yourself doing out and about so early?" he asked her loudly, it came out as cruel. She didn't reply to him. Instead she looked down at the ground. He held his glare but felt amusement at the possibility of her being scared. He thought about how fucked up that was.

The Candor girl looked up at him, her light shining toward the ground so he could finally see some of her features. She opened her mouth to reply as he continued glaring at her. She looked familiar, although he didn't know why. He didn't make a habit of fraternizing with Candor, they were annoying and never shut the hell up.

Maybe he didn't recognize her; maybe he just found her attractive. He shouldn't, she did look young enough not to have taken her aptitude test yet. If that was the case, she was breaking curfew. Why was she running in the middle of the night?

She still hadn't replied to him. He let his amusement finally show and smirked, "what's wrong? You don't seem to be scared of running in the dark, you can't possibly be afraid of me?" he told and stepped forward. She stared at him, expressionless. Interesting, usually Candor showed even the smallest emotion on their face. Everything was always out in the open.

He stepped toward her again, still amused that he was affecting her this much. She had to have been breaking curfew, and definitely not a full Candor member. A full Candor member would have not only answered him but tried to tell him their entire life story by this point. Her face was still expressionless, so he wasn't sure if she was scared of him, "maybe you are scared, or are you brain-dead?" he asked. He stopped smiling as he felt himself getting annoyed.

She finally responded, her words coming out clear as day, conveying no fear "Why do you care?" That surprised him so much that he didn't stop her as she stepped around him. What the fuck? He watched her begin to jog again as if she had forgotten he existed. If she had been a Dauntless member he would have reprimanded her, or beat the shit out of her.

Instead he watched her jog away. As she rounded a corner he, realized he would have to see if she would be at the choosing ceremony the next day. He had no doubt that he recognized her. He shook the thought and walked toward the Candor building to meet up with the other leaders and their assistants/ambassadors. His inner Erudite curiosity remaining as he attempted to forget about the Candor girl that had just ran into him.

"We don't need to have more security at the choosing ceremony. The factionless have been staying away altogether, in the past few months" Max told the large meeting room. Mackenzie, one of the Erudite leaders, spoke up next, "if Jack feels that more security is necessary, perhaps you should oblige. You have plenty of members to spare, for events that are as important as this it should be a top priority."

Eric rolled his eyes at the statement, he knew all too well that Erudite thought themselves to know it all, when in all actuality they knew very little of the way the security was set up, only about the things they helped build to keep it. They didn't understand that since Dauntless only accepted a set amount of initiates in the past, their numbers had dwindled. If they added more security to the choosing ceremony, it took away from the security Amity had for two days.

Max was the one who oversaw security procedures for such events, and anything that happened with Dauntless. The other four leaders each were assigned a faction to oversee. Eric worked with Amity. He hated it, but it was better than working with Abnegation. Max knew that it would affect the entire schedule at the gates on the south side, the guards that worked with the Amity, and possibly the guards that worked on the North gates near the factionless.

"Unfortunately, that is not an option. Adding more security to the ceremony takes away from the security elsewhere. Which is an unnecessary precaution." Max explained to Mackenzie. She opened her mouth to reply but was interrupted

"Erudite will not be using two of our main medical laboratories for the next two days, perhaps some of the security in our sector could be used for the ceremony?" Jeanine added to the conversation. The other three Erudite's at the table murmured in agreement. Johanna replied to her before Max could, "the factionless have never attacked us at our ceremonies. I think we should give them the benefit of the doubt, and not assume that they will leave us be." Eric rolled his eyes again. This was going to turn into an argument.

Max cleared his throat as some of the leaders began to put their say in, Abnegation normally lead the meeting but had remained silence throughout. "I can assure you that I have my best men scheduled for the event," Max spoke loud and clear.

He paused, smiling charmingly at the other leaders. "I will be in attendance as well as most of our leaders and a few supervisors," he explained further. "We can minimize security within Dauntless, we are all trained soldiers so it will not be an inconvenience. The ceremony will be well guarded, there is nothing to worry about, I assure you." A few of the Abnegation and Candor leaders nodded, as well as Johanna and two Amity who had volunteered for the meeting.

Eric smirked. Max would probably only bring one or two extra Dauntless to the ceremony than originally planned. Eric had been in Dauntless for almost five years, four of them as a leader, and he was still amazed when he watched Max charm his way out of things like this. Especially with women, Mackenzie seemed to have began to let the matter be and was looking at him as if she wanted to devour him. It was rather odd, that simple statements such as that could be spoken by Max in such a way that made people want to listen to him. That was a leadership quality that Eric was slightly envious of; it was admirable just as everything else was about him.

Eric noticed out of the corner of his eye that Jeanine had been watching his reaction. He could have cared less; she knew how much he looked up to Max. Jack Kang and the other Candor leaders began discussing the timeline of the next day. Eric didn't return the look and opted to ignore her; he listened intently to the matters of the meeting. He was precise, and although he hated leadership meetings that had all the factions together, he wanted to know every bit of information he could.

After two hours of the leaders discussing their training procedures for new initiates, and a third discussing the events of the following few days, the meeting finally adjourned. Eric exited the room with his fellow leaders and stood while Max and Abigail spoke to the Abnegation leaders. He took no part in the conversation; he typically didn't when Abnegation was involved, his Erudite upbringing had taught him they were an unnecessary faction. A fact he still agreed with even being in Dauntless. He reminded Four of it often.

He glanced around the hall, setting the group speaking next to the assistant's counter. Jeanine was speaking to a young man dressed in black and white. Standing next to him was a girl dressed similarly, but had heels on. He narrowed his eyes, realizing that the girl was

the one he had seen the night before.

Eric compared Jeanine to the girl, realizing there was no possible way they were not related closely. The girl looked like a female version of Jeanine's son, Matthew. Not just that, but she was extremely attractive. Eric knew that Matthew had cousins in Candor, she must have been one of them. Calvin Stephenson interrupted whatever Jeanine had been saying to the young Candor, Jeanine nodding to him in agreement.

The Candor girl turned to leave with her friend, her eyes landing on him during the movement. She faltered slightly, looking him up and down quickly then meeting his eyes. Her face remained expressionless, but her jaw clenched. He continued staring at her, returning the impassive gaze as she quickly turned to leave. The other Candor boy smiled at Jeanine and the other leaders and said something, then turned to follow his friend. Eric watched as she walked to the elevator, enjoying the view until he turned back to his fellow Dauntless leaders conversation..

5. Chapter 5

Natalia sat down in the large chair that the Abnegation had ushered her to. She looked at the mirrored walls, her heart racing with nervousness. She was suddenly grateful for her time at Candor, for she had learned not only how to show little to no expression but how to read body language. She knew how to hide her emotions and how to read others. She looked at her reflection in the mirror, noting how badly she needed to cut her blonde hair, it ran down her back, thin and flat.

She looked into her own eyes, thinking of how William had her father's eyes, a deep brown. She remembered the mischievous look they had always had in them. She shrugged of the thought of him and focused on the drink that the Abnegation had given her, she could have sworn the woman had spoken to her, but she had been too distracted to listen. She had been doing that too much the past few days.

Erudite.

Of course.

She knew that.

Everyone knew that.

She expected that.

That wasn't an issue at all.

That was her future.

Dauntless.

Wait?

Had she heard incorrectly?

Dauntless?

That wasn't her.

Was it?

No.

It couldn't be.

That was William.

Not her.

Jeanine can't know.

Shit.

Shit.

Jeanine can never know.

Shit.

She quickly walked to her home quickly after leaving the testing rooms. She had told the Abnegation woman to put her results as Erudite, as most people expected her to receive. She had no idea what her aunt would do if she found out. She never expected this.

She would choose Erudite. Obviously, that is why she begged her to hide the results. She knew she had anger problems. Since her brother died she had a short amount of patience with stupidity, yet she had been doing so well with controlling it. Was that just the Dauntless in disguise?

This was an option that all divergents had; the changes after the problems with Erudite hunting divergents led to the solution of all test results being entered manually. They were also unexcessible after being taken, and the factions could only see the footage of those taking the tests, not the simulation. Erudite had pitched a fit over it, but the other factions agreed that it was the only way to avoid conflict from those who tested multiple factions.

She felt like vomiting. She mentally thanked her father for making her late to the tests. She had been the last Candor, so there was no one outside when she exited. She jogged toward her house, trying to think straight.

The next morning Natalia dressed in black tight pants with a white tank top, a black cardigan covering it. She threw her hair up in the ponytail and headed out the door, toward her father's office. She opted to wear comfortable flats instead of the normal heels, hoping her father wouldn't mention it, not that she would care. She met him outside of the building and began to walk with him toward the choosing ceremony. The Candor walking around them were in full conversation, she ignored the noise and shifted her thoughts to her conversation with Matthew the previous evening after he had shown up at her home.

...

"Natalia! Natalia are you here?" she heard her cousin Matthew yelling from the doorway. She ran down the stairs, knowing immediately something was wrong. "Yes Matthew I.. - What's wrong?" he was looking at her as if she had a bug on her face. "Matthew what?" she asked again.

He said nothing as he walked to her living area and sat on the conch, putting his head in his hands. "Natalia, I.." he paused and looked up at her, eyes red. "She can't know. She will hate me, Natalia! I don't know what to do!"

"Natalia, Jack is speaking to you," she heard her father say. Were they at the ceremony already? She had gotten lost in thought again, looking at Jack she asked him to repeat what he had said. "Natalia, I know you will do very well at Erudite, and I look forward to working with you in the future." He patted her father on the back, telling him he did an excellent job raising her.

She replied to him courtly, lying easily when thanking him, agreeing and saying she looked forward to working with him as well. As they sat in their seats in the Candor section she glanced around at the many different colors; it was mesmerizing to see the mix of factions. Every so often they had public meetings, but they were rare. She had never attended a choosing ceremony; had never wanted to since William died.

As people began taking their seats and the noise quieted, her nerves began to rise. She wasn't ready for this. What was wrong with her? She was always so controlled; she didn't normally get lost in her thoughts as she had been in the previous few days. What would William say to her? What would he think of this situation? She wished so deeply that he was still alive to be there for them.

A hush fell over the room as people settled into their seats, Johanna taking the stage to make the speech for that year. It was a cheerful talk, beginning explaining the history of the factions as well as the responsibilities of each. It seemed like the normally expected speech that one might have for an event, just with an added cheeriness and excessive amount of smiling added to it.

The end of the speech was affected Natalia, "You have taken your aptitude test. The test meant to tell you who you are as a person. In recent years, we have come to know of those who test for multiple factions. It is not an easy choice for those, but regardless of our results we have to make decisions we are not prepared for. That is life. As most of you know, the age of initiation was raised to eighteen many years ago, but I was sixteen when we took our tests. I transferred to Amity from Erudite. It was one of the hardest choices I have ever had to make, to leave my family and friends, to choose a life of peace over a life of knowledge. The life I had grown up around, the mentality I knew so well, I left behind. I do not regret my choice in the slightest. As a child, I studied as much as a normal Erudite would, but always felt as if something was missing from my life. I loved being in Erudite, but it never felt like home to me. In my studies, I once came across a novel. A diary, from the world before the wars and terror that led to our faction system. A quote from this diary stuck with me, "the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." I want you to remember this quote, as I always have. I say this to you with the deepest kindness

in my heart that you must trust your aptitude test, but you must always trust yourself. This is one of the most important decisions you will make in your lifetime. My hopes for you all is that you follow who you truly are and that you may find happiness and joy in your decision. May peace be with you all."

Applause rang throughout the hall, the Erudite section being almost as quiet as the Abnegation. Natalia could only imagine the eye rolls that her aunt must have had during the speech. Although her sister and Johanna had been friends once, she knew Jeanine felt very strongly that one should choose only their test results. It was one of the biggest reasons she hadn't like the Divergent; in her mind, to have more than one choice gave the citizens too much control.

Natalia scoffed the thought of Jeanine's favor for control. Oh, how her aunt loved to control everything! She had not just Matthew's life mapped out but hers as well, a straight-forward path to leadership. She felt a course of anger run through her. She was beyond glad that Jeanine had been put in her place so many years back. She needed to be put in her place again.

As Johanna stepped back to the stage and began to call names for choosing, Natalia thought about what she was about to do. Why did she feel like this? Why was she questioning this? The test was right; she knew that. She knew that she was meant for Erudite! So why did she feel sick to her stomach when she thought of her actual results?

Nolan was called to the stage; he marched to the stage cheerfully. Natalia cheered loudly as Nolan chose to transfer to Amity, the smile still spread wide across his face. She was glad he would be happy; he had been a good friend to her. She was glad he knew where he was meant to be.

After what seemed like never ending amount of names, Natalia heard her cousin's name, "Matthew Charleston Matthews!" She heard some of the Candor and Dauntless snicker, she understood why others thought his name was odd, but never bothered to question it.

He walked to the stage and picked up the clean knife without looking at his mother. He walked to the bowls and paused. He looked toward the Candor section, quickly finding Natalia and locking eyes with her. She could see now that he was no longer upset as he was last night, but angry.

He made a small cut in his hand and held it over the burning goals.

Johanna looked shocked as she called his choice, glancing toward Erudite at his mother, "Dauntless." There was silence from the Erudite section. Matthew held his head high as walked toward the loud cheers.

Natalia felt her father tense beside her. The Candor crowd around her glanced back in surprise, not expecting Erudite's golden boy to transfer out of his faction. She kept her eyes on the stage, hating being the center of the attention she waited impatiently for her name to be called.

"Natalia Jean Stephenson!"

She stood up straight and stepped past her father who kept his eyes on the stage. He said nothing to her, didn't even glance at her, as she exited the aisle. She hadn't expected him to, but it made her clench her jaw anyways. She felt the sharp pang in her chest.

As she walked down the aisle between the Candor and Dauntless sections she counted every step, anger building up inside of her. She would be glad if she never had to speak to her father again. Everyone thought he was a great man, but he wasn't. Especially after her brother died. He was neglectful. Her aunt was the same with Matthew, ensuring he had a perfect life but never giving him the attention he deserved.

Natalia knew what she was going to do. She knew what she had to do just like Matthew did. She remembered the conversation they had the night before, how upset he had been. Matthew deserved better.

She picked up the knife and walked to the five bowls. Without hesitation, she cut her hand and held it above the burning coals.

She didn't want to be like her aunt.

She couldn't live a happy life in Erudite.

She needed to heal.

This was the only way to do it.

Johanna called her choice in the same expression as she had when calling Matthews choice, Cheers rang loudly from the Dauntless area. Natalia walked toward the cheers and sat next to him, who was glaring ahead at the stage. "We did it," he told her quietly." She nodded back.

They listened to the remaining names to be called without speaking, clapping when Dauntless did. "Anthony Ross Wight." She watched as Matthew's close friend pick up the knife and hold his hands above the coals as they had. Natalia was surprised, she glanced at Matthew, who answered her quietly. "I expected that." She half-smiled at Anthony as he walked up to them.

6. Chapter 6

Natalia threw her cardigan off and ran with the group of Dauntless initiates, all of which were yelling and hollering along the way. She hadn't looked back at anyone; there would be no point to it. She was Dauntless now. She knew that Anthony and Matthew were right behind her, it helped alleviate the anxiety she felt bubbling in her chest. She knew her, and Matthew would have a long talk ahead of them.

"C'mon Candor, the train!" She glanced to see the guy that had been a few seats down from her at the ceremony. He helped her onto the train. He was a Dauntless-born, and wow, was he tall, and handsome. SO handsome, and had bright green eyes. She watched as he helped Anthony, Michael climbing onboard behind him.

The boy turned to her, "I'm Daniel! And you are...?" he leaned in so she could hear, and motioned toward her. "Natalia!" she shouted so he could hear over the train, they shook hands. He looked back to Anthony and Matthew, narrowing his eyes. "Are you two related?" he hollered to Natalia, pointing at Matthew.

As she was going to answer a yell from across the train car interrupted, "Hey Danny who's the hot chick!" Daniel laughed as another piped up "way to start quickly with the transfers!" He shrugged at her as if apologizing, introducing her to a few other Dauntless-born.

"This is Mac, Todd, and that sweet-thang over there is Callie!" he pointed toward a girl next to Todd. "Nice to meet you!" she yelled back and returned to her conversation with Todd and another Candor transfer, Justin. Talia never got along with him, but she nodded to, and he returned the gesture while narrowing his eyes at her and glancing to Matthew.

Daniel leaned in and whispered that he would introduce her to the others later, as they weren't as cool as his friends anyways. He winked at her and turned to ask Mac a question. She shrugged and glanced at the two Erudite boys waiting on her, noticing Matthew's glare toward Daniel.

She ignored it and sat down with them, "why didn't you tell me that you were Dauntless Andrew?" He smiled at her, "I suppose I didn't think it mattered. I thought that you would be in Erudite with your cousin." She thought of how Anthony wasn't bad on the eyes, definitely not as attractive as Daniel. Matthew smirked, "he isn't smart enough for Erudite." Anthony made a face as if he were shocked, "Hey!" he exclaimed. She laughed with them. "So explain to me why both of you chose Dauntless. It's rather, unexpected.." he asked them both.

Matthew gave her a look that told her that they needed to speak before telling Anthony their reasons. Matthew told him that they wanted a different life than Erudite had to offer, Anthony only nodded and glanced at Natalia. She could tell he knew there was more to it than that. Natalia looked at the large train car, full of Dauntless-born as well as transfers.

She heard the boy named Frankie to bring up what they might expect during training. She knew as much as they did, enough to be prepared but not specific details. The Dauntless training changed every few years, but she knew that this year there were four stages of training. Conditioning and obstacle courses for two weeks (as well as other training), fights for two weeks, two weeks of fear simulations, and two weeks of more obstacle courses and training.

Two months, then they would be final members and would be able to choose their jobs, the most appealing part about Dauntless. She wouldn't have had a choice in Erudite, Matthew either. They were ranked throughout the entire course of training, the ranks giving them the priority of available jobs. She was so grateful they did not cut anyone unless necessary as they had in the past.

She felt someone elbow her softly, "you're awfully quiet for a Candor," Daniel told her. She smiled at him, "yeah I get that a lot."

Mac piped up "we need to teach you the Dauntless ways! I call dibs!" he winked at her, and she laughed. His features were plain, with had dark eyes and dark brown hair, but was at least 6'2 and was rather strong (like all of the other Dauntless-born).

"I'm Matthew, her cousin," Matthew piped up beside her, "this is my friend Andrew." The few Dauntless-born they were sitting next to looked at them, Daniel smiling. "You two look like you could be siblings, think you can make it in Dauntless?"

Before Matthew could answer one of the Dauntless-born near Callie yelled out that they had arrived. Natalia stood and glanced outside, helping Anthony up. After a moment she realized there were a few people waiting on a roof ahead. A Dauntless-born got in a position that inclined that he was about to run at something. Natalia quickly realized they had to jump onto the building. She scoffed to herself; they were nuts! Thank god she wasn't afraid of heights! She looked to Matthew, knowing that he was.

They watched as the other transfers whispered to one another, realizing they had to jump as well. Two Dauntless-born jumped, and Daniel told her she should go first, and he would be right behind. She saw Callie and another Dauntless jump. She gave Matthew another knowing look. "Don't worry Natalia; I'll push him if I have to!" Andrew told her.

She smiled and leaped to the roof, her heart jumping to her throat. She was used to the rambunctious behavior, she was from Candor, but the Dauntless took it to an entirely different level! She landed on her feet and rolled, Daniel and Mac following right afterward, landing gracefully and avoiding injury. They dusted themselves off, walking toward the Dauntless that were waiting for them.

Natalia noticed one of her knees was scraped, as well as an elbow. Daniel urged her forward toward the crowd. She turned to verify that Anthony and Matthew had followed her. Matthew looked pale and had a large scrape on his arm. She gestured them to follow her with the Dauntless-born, Matthew glaring in response. She heard him mumble to Anthony something about "the stupidity of Dauntless," as Anthony replied to the comment with a laugh.

She walked with Daniel to the front of the small crowd, noticing immediately that two of the Dauntless members had leadership tattoos, one of which was a female. Andrea, she remembered her, the only female leader Dauntless had. One of the men just happened to be the one she had run into the previous morning while running.

What was his name? Why couldn't she remember one name? He had his arms folded and was looking out at all of the initiates with an annoyed expression. He paused when he met her eyes; she could have sworn they narrowed before moving on, and stopping to the person behind her, Matthew, his eyes becoming colder than they had been previously.

Natalia shook her head and turned when she heard a man yell out, "looks like they all made it here in one piece this year!" she heard some of the Dauntless-born snicker. "quite a big group," Andrea smiled and replied to him while she looked around the crowd. "Do I count three hippies!? Holy shit!" someone yelled out. Andrea's smile disappeared as she narrowed her eyes at the one who had yelled

out.

A booming voice rang out. "Shut it! HEY! LISTEN UP!" the leader with his arms folded yelled. The crowd silenced immediately and paid him their full attention.

"My name is Eric, and I am a Dauntless leader." Yes, that was his name! He was built like a tank, she thought. He glared out at the crowd as he continued "as a leader I will be overseeing some of your training. It won't be easy, and some of you will probably leave us before your training is up." he paused and motioned behind him. "This is your only way into Dauntless. So who wants to jump first?" he smirked.

Beside her, she saw Daniel elbow Mac, who stepped away smiling at him and shaking his head. She mentally noted that she needed to teach him how to gain someone's attention without using an elbow. "Seriously!?" she heard Justin whisper loudly behind her. Eric narrowed his eyes and stepped forward, "you don't jump, you get to be factionless." The crowd moved to get out of his way as he slowly stepped toward Justin.

"Fuck it! I'll go!" she looked to the voice next to that had spoken up. Daniel, of course, grinned widely at her, winking yet again. She narrowed his eyes at him, he smiled too much and needed to stop winking. She felt a spark inside of her; she needed to one-up him. And ask him later to teach her how to wink.. Plus she knew that the Dauntless numbers dwindled since they cut initiates in the past, they wouldn't encourage them to jump off a roof if it wasn't safe. Eric stopped and turned to them.

Natalia looked at Eric, "I'm after him" she said firmly. Eric lifted his left eyebrow, the one that was pierced, motioning toward the ledge. She noticed an impressed look on a few of the other Dauntless that were with the leaders. "How did I not realize how crazy your cousin is before now?" she heard Anthony whisper to Matthew. She turned to smile at him and realized Matthew was still pale.

Daniel went to the edge and looked over, shrugging nonchalantly, he jumped. Natalia smiled as she heard a few gasps behind her, turning into laughs as they heard a deep voice screaming as he fell. This was not dangerous in the slightest; she was sure of it. She turned back to Matthew and whispered, "you can do this, they wouldn't ask us to do something like this if it was too dangerous." Anthony nodded in agreement. She turned and walked the few feet toward the ledge and looked down, seeing nothing.

William would have gone. First, she thought.

After a moment, Eric snapped at her, "Candor if you aren't going to jump move over so someone Dauntless can." She glared at him, taking the last step to the ledge. The competitive spark returning, "Oh trust me," she drawled, "I'm Dauntless." She saw his eyes darken before turning her head back toward the large hole.

She jumped whole-heartedly into the abyss. Fear and adrenaline ripped through her veins as she held in a scream. She gasped after a few seconds when she hit softness, laughing she realized it was a net. Had she just snapped at a leader? She was never disrespectful to the leaders of Erudite or Candor, shit! She was sure he remembered her

snapping at him after her run; it had been dark, but she knew he recognized her. Matthew was going to give her a lecture about this; she was sure of it.

She rolled toward the side of the net to find a man with brown hair and dark blue eyes, and a scar on his chin, helps her down, "what's your name?" She glanced behind him at Daniel who yelled, "added' girl Natalia!" She looked back at the man and nodded to confirm her name was Natalia.

" the Second jumper, Natalia!" the crowd of Dauntless yelled. These people were crazy she thought while smiling. She walked over to Daniel, finding him next to a man who was only a few years older that has similar features to him. Daniel introduced him as older brother Tristan, who explained that he usually worked at the gates near the Amity sector but had the week off.

They cheered for each jumper as they came down the hole. The third jumper ended up being Justin, followed by Callie and an Amity boy she didn't know. They all walked over to them and started chatting and introducing themselves to one other. Another Dauntless man walked up behind her, invading her space and frightening her. Natalia jumped then laughed at herself, he raised his eyebrows and smiled at her. "Hello gorgeous," he drawled looking her up and down.

She rolled her eyes as the group around her laughed, "c'mon Scotty she just got here!" Callie scolded him. Tristan introduced him as his "best friend, the horn-ball," gaining another laugh from the group. She was used to men being attracted to her and telling her they were. This was different, though, rather than just telling her as the Candor did they were flirtatious. That might have something to do with the fact that she told just about every Candor guy not to bother, other than Nolan but that had been different since they were friends.

Mac followed as the sixth jumper, screaming like Daniel, but high pitched. The scream earned him a roar of laughter from the crowd, as he got off a few people teased him and he laughed along with them running to Daniel and jumping on his back.

"That was so awesome! We're finally here dude!" he screamed in his ear as Daniel shoved him off and told them they had only left for a few hours. They talked as they waited for the others to jump, Tristan explaining to her and the other transfers standing near that the man who helped her off the net was named Four. He was a transfer instructor along with a guy named Uriah, Lauren, and Stephen were the Dauntless instructors.

Next came Anthony, who had fallen quietly. He calmly walked over to Natalia. And whispered to her, "he's so frightened, I told him I'd murder him if he didn't jump." She felt herself get nervous as another person fell into the net, "How Dauntless of you Anthony," she replied, "he'll jump," Anthony put his arm around her, "you don't sound so sure of that," he said to her, continuing to whisper to her.

"Did he come here for you? Be honest with me." She shook her head, about to reply until she was interrupted by a voice from the group, boy did Dauntless love doing that.

"Why are all the hot ones taken!?" the group laughed. They turned to see that it had been Scotty who had spoken up. Daniel smiled at her and raised an eyebrow, "Oh, no, it's not like that we are just friends," she replied as Anthony removed his arm. Another scream echoed through the room, and they turned to see that it had been Matthew.

"Matthew!" she heard him yell to Four, "my name is Matthew! Damn it I hate heights!" Laughter echoed in the large room, once he was off of the net he stormed toward his friends. "I am never doing that again! What if that net broke? I could have died!" he hollered and pulled Natalia into a hug. She laughed at him and told him not to be such a baby. "It isn't funny Natalia!" She ignored him and introduced him to the group as another jumper fell, which ended up being Andrea.

The crowd dispersed a bit, and Natalia realized that the leader jumping probably meant everyone had jumped. She turned to see a faded purple door open at the side of the room. Stairs she thought, as Eric and the other Dauntless walked out of it. Scott and Tristan waved them goodbye and followed the retreating Dauntless members.

Natalia glanced around at the initiates who had quieted. There were five other Candor transfers, two girls, and three boys; all of which she knew but never bothered to be on a personal level with. That wasn't saying much though since all of them could tell their life stories in a matter of minutes. Six were from Erudite; she knew one of them was named Elizabeth because Matthew always complained about her being an "insufferable moron." She, of course, knew Matthew and Andrew but didn't know who the others were. Three Amity and no Abnegation. Fifteen transfers and seventeen Dauntless-born; a rather high number for Dauntless initiates.

Eric and Andrea walked toward the crowd of initiates and met up with the few people who were most likely their instructors. She heard Andrea tell another girl, who must be Lauren, that one of the Candor-borns had a meltdown and chose to be factionless rather than jump. Natalia gulped, why wouldn't she just jump? Even Matthew had jumped and he hated heights.

Eric spoke loudly to the two girls, "Dauntless follow orders. She didn't want to jump, she doesn't deserve to be in our faction." The initiates remained silent. Eric turned to them as another man spoke up, Four who introduced himself loudly, receiving snickers from the Candor and Erudite-born.

The trainers began to explain what the initiates would need to expect from their training, as well as the Dauntless-born would be trained separately for the first two weeks so the transfers had a chance to get into shape. They also explained that since there was such a small group they would be together otherwise. The large group followed them down the hallways, being shown the main areas of the compound. The Dauntless-born remained rowdy as they already knew their way around, but the rest of the group listening intently.

7. Chapter 7 Eric's POV

"Are you prepared to help out the trainers this year?" Max asked Eric as they walked toward the Choosing Day ceremony. "We are estimating to have at least fifteen Dauntless-Born staying, so hopefully the

initiation class will be a decent size." Max continued. Eric yawned as he drank from his coffee mug, "hopefully they will be worth my time," he replied to the leader he viewed as his mentor.

Max smirked, "working with the initiates is good for you. I expect you to be able to take my place one day Eric, you need to learn to work with everyone patiently while still getting the jobs we need to be done, accomplished." Eric rolled his eyes but listened respectfully. He was glad that Max gave him a second chance, and that he thought highly of him, but he had heard this speech multiple times, and it always ended in the same way. With Max telling him he could be authoritative without scaring the living shit out of every person he meets, as well as that he needed to practice more patience.

"One of them will end up being your assistant, your last one by the way," Max told him. Eric scoffed, "you act like it is my fault that everyone of the one's that has been assigned to be my assistant is stupid!" Max laughed at him and put his hand on his shoulder as they arrived at the entrance to The Hub, "You forget that you are in Dauntless Eric, not Erudite! Five! You have had FIVE assistants!" Eric frowned as he drank his last sip of coffee, glancing around at the crowd of people.

"I just don't want to work with a fucking idiot the entire time. What are you going to do without Tina by the way?" Eric asked him. Tina had been his assistant for three years, she was efficient and relatively smart for being a Candor transfer, but she was pregnant with twins and due in a few months. Max signed, "I don't know yet, but I am sure we will figure it out! Hopefully, she doesn't want too much time off, Dauntless may fall apart without her to keep me in check!" he joked as he urged Eric into the large hall.

Eric had attended the choosing ceremony every year since his own but was still mesmerized seeing the separate faction sections sitting in groups. The grays of the Abnegation, silent and sullen looking as they sat and waited patiently for the ceremony to begin. The bright reds and yellows of the Amity, smiling and laughing among one another cheerfully. He used to hate Amity but had begun to accept them since he was the leader who worked directly with them.

He frowned as he glanced at the section that was covered in shades of blue, the Erudite, speaking in low voices politely and professionally. Looking at them gave him a bitter taste in his mouth, which was made worse as he noticed Jeanine standing with her fellow leaders and her son Matthew. Eric noted that he looked nervous and that he had changed significantly in the years he hadn't seen him. He would probably be handed a position in leadership, yet again Eric found himself hoping he would not be like his mother. He looked away as he saw his brother Richard walk up to speak to the group of leaders.

He walked with Max toward the rowdy Dauntless section as Max conversed with others in his faction, none of them bothering to do more than nod in acknowledgment to him. He glanced over the black and white Candor section, as loud as Dauntless but mostly due to arguments and protests from their oh-so-honest members. He skimmed the crowd in search for the girl with blonde hair and bright blue eyes, knowing that he would see her. He didn't find her as he followed Max to their seats, only one row of the ones reserved for

initiates next to his fellow leaders, Chris with his son Thomas who was to choose today as well, Jackson, and Andrea.

He finally found who he had been looking for, the blonde staring blankly toward the stage, sitting next to Calvin Stephenson, the Candor leader that had been speaking to Jeanine the day prior when he had seen her. He could see her bright blue eyes from where he was, and her shiny blond hair was thrown into a long ponytail, by the looks of it the length reached to her waist. She reminded him too much of Jeanine but was rather attractive. He sat in his seat and looked toward the stage as well, noting that Johanna was speaking to two of her fellow Amity members before walking toward the center of the stage.

Amity was in charge of the ceremony this year, so Eric knew the speech would be interesting. He had gotten to know Johanna quite well since being assigned to work with Amity; each of the Dauntless leaders took responsibility for one faction's security.

Chris worked with Candor, Jackson with Abnegation, Andrea with Erudite (she had worked with Amity before her and Eric had switched years ago), and Max overseeing them all and Dauntless. Eric hated working with Amity at first but had gotten used to it. It helped that Johanna was not only a kind and patient person, but that she was intelligent as well.

" In recent years, we have come to know of those who test for multiple factions. It is not an easy choice for those, but regardless of our results we have to make decisions we are not prepared for. That is life. As most of you know, the age of initiation was raised to eighteen many years ago, but I was sixteen when we took our tests. I transferred to Amity from Erudite. It was one of the hardest choices I have ever had to make, to leave my family and friends, to choose a life of peace over a life of knowledge. The life I had grown up around, the mentality I knew so well, I left behind. I do not regret my choice in the slightest. As a child, I studied as much as a normal Erudite would, but always felt as if something was missing from my life."

That was another reason he had learned to deal with Amity; Johanna was similar to him. She had been in Erudite trying to live up to their high expectations but had felt something was missing as if it was never enough. Unlike him though she hadn't chosen a path of self-destruction and let an Erudite leader manipulate her into doing her dirty work.

"In my studies, I once came across a novel. A diary, from the world before the wars and terror that led to our faction system. A quote from this diary stuck with me, "the final forming of a person's character lies in their hands." I want you to remember this quote, as I always have. I say this to you with the deepest kindness in my heart that you must trust your aptitude test, but you must always trust yourself. This is one of the most important decisions you will make in your lifetime. My hopes for you all is that you follow who you truly are and that you may find happiness and joy in your decision. May peace be with you all."

Applause rang throughout the hall, mostly from the Amity, Dauntless, and Candor sections. Eric knew that the diary was that of a young woman named Anne Frank. He had read it in his studies, but it hadn't

peaked his interest, so he hadn't studied it as thoroughly as other books. Perhaps he should try to get a copy of it to read again.

That was another thing he loved about his faction; he had freedom. He was able to obtain knowledge behind closed doors without the scrutiny or expectations of anyone. He had collected four large bookshelves in his apartment in the previous few years, as well as stacks in his bedroom.

Johanna had begun to call the names for choosing in alphabetical order. He counted as each one went, cheering loudly when a Dauntless-born chose to stay in their faction, following him was a transfer from Candor. The next name called Eric recognized as the boy he had seen with the blonde girl the previous day. He wondered if she was his boyfriend, he shook off the thought as the boy transferred to Amity. Eric watched as each name was called, there were more than five transfers from both Amity and Candor, only two from Erudite, one from Dauntless, and none from Abnegation so far.

Eric heard Johanna call Matthew, Jeanine's son to the stage. Matthew quickly cut his hand and held it over the coals, transferring to Dauntless. Eric was shocked, Max was as well and whispered to him "Jeanine is going to be livid. Her son and niece were supposed to begin training as Erudite leaders immediately." Eric nodded in agreement and glanced back at where Jeanine's niece was sitting, her blue eyes still staring at the stage as she sat straight. He noticed that her father was as tense as her, obviously not expecting his nephew to transfer to Dauntless either.

Eric watched the rest of the ceremony and skimmed the Dauntless initiates who had already chosen and were sitting below him. He recognized Chris's son Thomas, as well as the two troublemakers names Daniel and Mac; two girls named Tiffany and Kylie, who were speaking to another girl with dark features, an Erudite girl who had a pouty face, a Candor boy, and a tall Amity boy.

"Natalia Jean Stephenson!" Eric glanced toward the Candor section to see the blonde girl rise, passing her father. He noticed that he avoided her gaze and was still as tense as he had been when Eric had looked at them before. Natalia, that was her name. She did the same thing as her cousin had, cutting her hand and quickly holding it above the coals. Dauntless roared as she walked briskly to her new seat.

Eric looked at Max, holding a shocked face that was a rare thing to see. Andrea whispered over Jackson to the two of them, "three of our initiates are faction leader's children. The other factions won't be happy about that." The five Dauntless leaders nodded in agreement.

8. Chapter 8 (Eric's POV)

**Sorry if the POV's haven't been clear, I will post them at the top of each chapter so that they are! Sorry for not updating sooner, I have been busy this week! **

Eric's POV

Eric watched as the train neared the large building, readying himself

for the initiates arrival. The few Dauntless members around him were talking amongst one another. He heard the three men to his left discussing the seventeen Dauntless-Born, who had opted to stay, two of them being unexpected, and Andrea and a supervisor names Dan talking about the gate security near Erudite, two others listening to them and a female named Shantelle walking toward the end of the building.

As the train came closer, he saw the small silhouettes of a few of the initiates prepping themselves for the jump onto the building. He secretly hoped they all made the leap, as he would be the one to order one of the supervisors standing on the roof with him to clean up the mess if they didn't. No one wanted that job, and no one wanted to see an eighteen-year-old kid fall to their death.

He cringed as his mind leaped to that of Jeanine testing on the Divergent all those years ago. He had done terrible things for her. He hadn't murdered anyone, but he had assisted in a couple. If he were to take a truth serum and were asked the question all Candor were asked, he would say that was it. Letting his need for control and his strive to be the best in the eyes of his old leader outweigh any morals he may have had. He knew he could never make up for it, only learn from the many mistakes he had made. It hadn't helped that he had been raised to be that way, he had never known what a good man was until he met Max and Chris.

He watched the first of the initiates leap onto the roof, the Dauntless-Born cheering and whooping as they landed. An Amity transfer was laughing along with a few of them as he dusted himself off. He saw Thomas jump with Natalia shortly after, followed by the Dauntless-born Mac, Daniel, and Dauntless-born he knew was named Rebecca. Shortly after the Erudite boy that had transferred to Dauntless last followed with Matthew taking the leap at the same time.

Eric gazed over the other initiates, making mental notes of which ones were weaker than the others. He noticed that the two troublemakers Daniel and Mac were leading the initiates toward them, good, Daniel turning to speak to Natalia as they walked. Eric watched her as she stopped and glanced back to her cousin and his friend. He kept his arms folded as the large group walked toward him.

He counted the initiates quickly, thirty-three total. He hadn't realized it was such a large group back at the Hub, as he had been too focused on the fact that three of the initiates this year were leader's children. Eric hadn't thought it was that big of a deal, but Max explained to him that the factions still didn't fully trust Erudite or Dauntless, even though Dauntless had proven they wanted nothing to do with Erudites experiments.

Max had used Thomas as an example that children of leaders often received extra attention and knew more than others for their factions. If Thomas ranked well, he was to be trained to take charge of the entire security system on the wall farthest away from the Dauntless sectors. The fact that Jeanine's child, as well as her niece transferring together, was an even bigger deal to the other factions, especially since they had high expectations for Erudite.

Eric continued skimming over the initiates, pausing when he caught

the eyes of Natalia. He moved on quickly to Matthew standing behind her; he narrowed his eyes. He hoped neither of them was like Jeanine. He heard Dan yell out, "looks like they all made it here in one piece this year!" Andrea replied to him, "quite a big group."

Eric almost laughed when another Dauntless yelled out, "Do I could see three hippies? Holy shit!" He held the smirk off his face knowing that Andrea wouldn't be happy about the comment. Being from Amity she still got offended when people spoke ill of her old faction, as she was proof even "hippies" could make it in Dauntless.

"Shut it! HEY!" Eric yelled to the crowd, "LISTEN UP!" They silenced immediately. Of course, they did, he knew he was intimidating, he had to be. "My name is Eric, and I am a Dauntless leader," he paused for effect, seeing a few eyes narrow in hearing he was a leader. He was far too used to the reaction he received every year because of his age; that was why he put most of his effort into intimidating them. They wouldn't respect him if he acted otherwise.

"As a leader, I will be overseeing some of your training. It won't be easy, and some of you will probably leave us before your training is up," he paused again and motioned behind him, secretly hoping that they all were strong enough to make it. Dauntless needed soldiers and had stopped cutting people, but they couldn't compromise. Those low on the list would be given unfavorable job assignments.

"This is your only way into Dauntless, so who wants to jump first?" he explained and motioned behind him. He couldn't contain a smirk as he watched some of their faces in horror. This was one of the only good parts of training initiates, watching their fears. He enjoyed deciphering each fear and figuring out the phobia's name. He had every fear he had come across memorized. The best part was at the end, watching them overcome each of these fears in one way or another. He would never admit that to anyone but Max and Chris though.

The reactions were mixed as a few seconds passed, Dauntless-born elbowing one another and looks of horror on some of the Erudite and Amity transfers. Usually a Candor would have spoken up by now, "seriously?" There we go, Eric stepped toward the boy dressed in black and white, his eyes widening but he stood straighter. Eric continued to smirk, "You don't jump, you get to be factionless!" He took another step toward him, slightly turning his head to the side and folded his arms again.

"Fuck it! I'll go!" Eric's and every other head turned toward the voice, Daniel. It usually ended up being a Dauntless-born jumping first, but every once in awhile it would be a transfer. Daniel turned to Natalia with a wide grin. Eric watched him as he winked at her, of course, the Dauntless-born would be the first to jump on a transfer female. Boys his age thought with nothing but what was in their pants and the chance at attractive fresh meat would be unbearable.

Eric found it interesting that instead of swooning, as most girls in Dauntless did when it came to the most popular boys, narrowed her eyes at him. Eric turned his full body toward them, wishing for some reason that he could read her mind. Natalia looked him dead in the eye, "I'm after him."

Eric kept his arms folded as Daniel walked toward the ledge and

looked over it. Eric found himself curious again about what might be going on in her head; her reaction was Dauntless, competitive. She was attractive, but not his type. She looked too much like Jeanine.

Eric continued to watch Natalia as Daniel jumped over the edge, letting his eyes wander to judge the crowds reaction as they jumped then fixing his gaze back on the blonde girl who was smiling. She turned and whispered to her brother, then turned and walked to the ledge. Eric watched as she looked over the edge, after a moment he spoke up, "Candor if you aren't going to jump move over so someone Dauntless can."

The sentence had come out cruel, yet instead of looking intimidated as most initiates, and even most of the Dauntless would have, she glared at him and took another step toward the ledge. "Oh trust me," she said confidently "I'm Dauntless." Eric felt his anger spark at the thought of an initiate talking back to him, especially in from of the other initiates, he watched the girl leap over the edge without looking back.

He turned back to the initiates quickly, "who is next?" he snapped. A small group inched toward the front, mostly Dauntless but an Amity stepping up first. "I will go," the boy said and walked to the edge. Eric glared at him as he watched him gulp, he glanced at Andrea, who was smirking admirably at the boy. He wondered what place she had jumped during her initiation.

The group began to jump one after another quickly, the Erudite boy with Matthew whispering to him quickly. When he went to jump, he glanced back at Matthew and gave him a knowing look, then turned to fall. After he had gone the remaining group jumped one after another hesitantly.

Eric glared at Matthew, "you think that just because your mother is a leader you won't have to jump with the rest of them?" Matthew looked up at him, eyes widening he began to reply, "no, no of course not. I suffer from acrophobia is all.." Eric saw him clench his jaw as his face remained pale.

Eric smirked cruelly and walked up to him, only inches from his face he replied coldly, "guess you'll get to overcome your fears quicker than most initiates, jump." Eric waited for him to move, "now initiate! Or you can be factionless." Matthew remained frozen.

Eric turned back toward the few others that were left, "I suppose Jeanine's little angel should have stayed in Erudite." he paused as he looked over the edge and turned back to face him, arms folded again. "Don't worry; I'll let your little cousin know you made a mistake."

As if coming out of a trance Matthew unfroze and walked toward the ledge, without hesitating he threw himself over the edge, screaming as he went. Eric found himself shocked but shook it off, turning to a Candor girl who was shaking and had backed away from the group. The rest of the Dauntless members had begun to descend the stairway on the side of the roof, apparently assuming the girl wouldn't be jumping.

Eric hoped in the back of his mind that she would jump, but knew that

it would be a waste of time to force her. If she wasn't brave enough to do so, she didn't need to be protecting alongside those who were Dauntless. The roof was empty except for him and Andrea, the group probably waiting for them at the bottom of the stairwell.

"Are you going to jump Candor? I'm not pushing you, decide quickly," he snapped at her. She began to cry, "are you fucking kidding me?" he walked toward her. "Dauntless don't cry initiate! Jump, now!" he yelled at her and pointed toward the stairs. "Listen here little Candor, if you don't jump off this fucking roof right now, you will be factionless. FACTIONLESS. You won't belong anywhere, is that what you want?" The girl said nothing as she cried harder and lowered herself to the ground.

Andrea piped up from behind him, "Eric lets go; there is nothing we can do." Eric paused while glaring at the girl, he shook his head and turned back and walked past Andrea. Had the roof still been full he wouldn't have bothered trying to convince her? He briskly swung the door open and walked down the stairs, walking past his fellow members without bothering to acknowledge them.

9. Chapter 9

****Keep in mind the French translation probably isn't great, I used Google Translate****

When they neared what Four called the chasm, Natalia was still near the front with her friends and cousin. The water smelt fresh, but the drop looked deadly. He explained that people have jumped, and it was beyond dangerous. She thought anyone would be stupid to believe that they could survive the jump, realizing that they had obviously done it on purpose. She felt herself pale at the thought of jumping and Matthew pulled her away from the railing. She mentally scolded herself for the dumb thought and her heart pinched in pain. The thought of anyone committing suicide made her sick, how could it not, though.

As they followed the trainers Daniel and Mac joked quietly with the Amity boy that had jumped fifth, she had missed his name. As they continued down a narrower hallway he tripped bumped into her, forcing her into Elizabeth, who had been walking behind them. He began apologizing immediately asking if she was alright. She smiled at him and nodded, he reminded her of Nolan except he was tall with black hair and tanned skin, with deep brown eyes. He smiled back, raising his hand, beginning to introduce himself "I'm Jacob..." He was interrupted by an obnoxious female voice "watch where you're going hippie!"

Natalia was taken aback, although she shouldn't have been after a life in Candor. A Candor would not have scolded someone for making a mistake, especially if they apologized for it. She turned to see that it was Elizabeth who had spoken. Natalia immediately felt a surge of annoyance course through her veins. She thought that she looked like a spoiled bitch, the fact that Matthew hated her definitely didn't help.

Natalia glared at Elizabeth, feeling her inner Candor side rise to the occasion, she snapped and stepped toward her "he said it was an accident" Elizabeth flinched, but folded her arms. Pretending that

Natalia hadn't seen the flinch, she returned the glare. "I don't care he should watch where he's going," she replied sourly, looking Natalia up and down.

"Natalia. she is not worth the argument." Matthew told her. She ignored him, "Oh please, like anyone wants to touch you intentionally," Natalia retorted, her Candor side coming out, she began walking away. An "oooh" came from Mac behind her, along with a few snickers from the crowd of initiates that had stopped to watch the altercation. Elizabeth laughed, oblivious to the fact that Natalia knew body language so well that she could tell she wasn't comfortable with confrontation, "yeah right, the hippy probably did it on purpose to..."

Natalia felt her jaw clench again, her anger searing rapidly as she took another step toward her, interrupting her mid-sentence, much like a Dauntless or Candor would. She understood SO WELL why many Erudite hated this girl so much. "I'm from Candor I can assure you that he didn't.." she began to reply but was interrupted by someone walking through the crowd of initiates.

"Are you joking me? You've been here five god damned minutes, and you are already bickering with each other? Great! Just great!" Natalia turned to see that it was one of the female trainers, Lauren, speaking to them. Lauren looked to Mac, asking him what happened.

"I don't know; I was just hoping they'd start wrestling!" Mac replied with his eyes wide, gathering a laugh from the crowd. Lauren glared at him, "you aren't funny Mac." Natalia hid her amusement behind her hand; she could tell Mac was known for his light mood. She felt her anger begin to calm until she looked back at Elizabeth's face.

She heard Lauren mutter under her breath and glared at another trainer who was laughing with the crowd, Uriah. He coughed, then told them to move along and gestured them forward. Natalia glared at Elizabeth as she followed her friends, Daniel walking behind her.

"Bitch," Natalia heard behind her. She quickly turned around, ready to show her how truly bitchy she could be. "OOMPH" she ran into Daniel, who began pushing her toward the direction she had been going. "Listen to him; she's not worth your time," he told her. She heard Mac pipe up that she would get the chance to shut her up in training.

She noticed that Andrea was ahead of the group, she was smirking and glancing behind her as she whispered to the two Dauntless men she was with. As they stopped she nodded to Natalia, who overheard her tell the trainers that they would see them later on, walking down a side-hallway. Eric and two other men following shortly after.

They began walking again and continued until reaching the end of a long hallway, finding a huge room with at least thirty bunk beds. Natalia walked to one of the beds in the a corner as the group filed in. "Who's room is this?" a girl asked. Natalia had already guessed it was meant for them to share, a fact she hadn't known about the Dauntless training. "All of yours" she heard Four reply humorously. She heard Mac tell Callie "hell yes" who punched him in the arm. A chuckle rang through the room.

The trainers announced that curfew was at ten that evening, explained a few rules, and left them on their own. The group dispersed to choose beds and look at the shared bathroom. Natalia chose the bed in the corner she was standing at. "I'm bunking above you, Natalia!" Mac yelled at her. Matthew looked at him and took off his blue jacket, setting it on Natalia's top bunk.

"Or notttttt.." he said and jumped on the one above the bed Daniel was sitting on. Anthony chose the bottom bunk next to her, with Justin choosing the bunk above him. The Dauntless clothing for transfers was laid out on a table near the entrance to the shared bathroom.

Natalia grabbed tight black jeans with a dark gray tanktop, and some black socks with small black boots. She watched the other female transfers walked to the bathroom to use the shower stalls to change, the boys and a Candor girl named Abby is not bothering to cover up. Natalia didn't quite care about covering up, so long as no one made comments or went near her. Even the comments she could ignore easily. She figured the rest of them would get used to the small space as well.

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"You two seem quiet for Candor you know," Callie observed, speaking to her and Justin as they all sat on their beds. "Usually, you all don't shut up!" Natalia laughed, "there's a reason I'm not in Candor anymore," she replied as Justin agreed in nodding his head. "I don't want everyone knowing every single thing that is on my mind," she continued.

They all looked over as they heard a crash, Mac had hit his foot getting off his bunk, "mother fucker! Screw this! Daniel give me the bottom bunk!" Daniel stood up and told him no, they began fighting playfully next to their bed. Natalia realized that it was probably common since only the transfers were watching them.

"Je me Suis fait une terrible erreur (_I've made a terrible mistake_)!" Matthew drolled to Natalia. She couldn't help but laugh, "cesser d'Être dramatique, vous avez une aptitude pour cette (_stop being dramatic, you have an aptitude for this_)," she replied to him, taking longer to think of the entire sentence. She was fluent in French, but still struggled. She had only been learning for two years, whereas her cousin had been learning for most of his life. Matthew smiled, he usually helped her when she struggled.

Andrew couldn't even understand them, ignoring them when they spoke French to one another. Everyone else looked at them strangely. Only the best of Erudite were taught secondary languages; they had to test well enough in certain subjects to have the opportunity. Natalia had been lucky to test well enough, and being in Candor, it was rare for her to have been given the chance.

"You know another language?" Daniel walked over to her and raised his arms to lean against their bunk bed. "Not going to lie, that's hot," he smiled at her, "say something again?"

"Yes dauntless sont assez coquette (_these dauntless are quite flirtatious_)!" Matthew told her,

Natalia ignored Daniel and looked to Matthew again, "Oui, mais il est plutÃ´t mignon vous ne pensez pas _(yes, but he's rather cute, don't you think)_" She smirked at him and replied. Matthew responded to her with a scoff as he rolled his eyes.

Daniel's smile grew, "what are you two saying?" Natalia stood from her new bed and stood next to him. She folded her arms and glanced him up and down, "Il ne semble pas mon type, fait-il? (_he doesn't seem like my type, does he?_) " she said looking at Daniel, but speaking to Matthew.

Matthew scoffed again, "Pas comme Ã§a va vous arrÃªter_ (not like that will stop you)_" he replied. "Hey!" she exclaimed, picked up her pillow and hitting him with it. He began laughing, "I'm only joking!" he told her as she stopped. "Well, sort of," he said again smiling. Natalia threw her pillow at him again.

"I'm hungry!" Mac yelled from across the room. Daniel agreed and offered to show them where the cafeteria was. Natalia nodded in response as Andrew spoke up, "I hope the food is good.."

10. Chapter 10 (Eric's POV)

Eric's POV **sorry for the SHORT SHORT chapter! I'll make up for it!**

Eric and Andrea walked toward the crowd of initiates and the trainers that were waiting for them. He nodded to Lauren, then to Uriah, and glared at Four. Fucking Four fears. Needed a fucking nickname to show it off. Eric loathed him. Four had tried to convince Max that he would never change, and Max wanted to make him a leader.

Eric scoffed in his head, a stiff, a fucking Dauntless leader. Almost as funny as Max mentioning that his girlfriend, another stiff, Tris, would be a good leader as well. He knew it was in large part to them both being leader's children. Seemed to be a hot commodity among Dauntless, transfers that are leader's children.

Andrea told Lauren that the Candor-born girl had broken down on the roof, choosing to be factionless. Eric spoke to the two girls, his voice loud and echoed in the large room "Dauntless follow orders. She didn't want to jump; she doesn't deserve to be in our faction."

Eric turned to the eerily quiet group of initiates as Four spoke up, receiving a few snickers. Good, it was a fucking stupid name. He looked over the initiates as the trainers spoke to them, walking down the cavernous hallways and toward the Chasm.

As he skimmed over the group, he heard Four explain to the group that they would be training together, the initiates acting up but the Dauntless-born rowdy. Eric glared at them but they only slightly quieted. He decided it would be a fight best saved for training, let them have a good first day in Dauntless.

Eric walked next to Andrea toward the dorm rooms toward the front of

the large group. "What do you think of this group so far?" she asked him quietly. "Hmmpf," he replied to her. She narrowed her eyes at him, "We're friends you don't have to.." she paused as she turned to watch the commotion behind them.

From the front of the group it was hard to see what was happening, but it seemed that some of the initiates were arguing. Eric's curiosity peaked upon realizing that it was an Erudite girl and Natalia. "Come on, come on, move along!" they heard Uriah tell the initiates. Eric turned back to Andrea who was smirking toward the initiates, Andrea nodded toward one of them and asked Eric "I think this year will be interesting, don't you?" she asked him. He shook his head and rolled his eyes dramatically.

Lauren walked past them and gave Andrea a sarcastic smile. Andrea told her fellow members that she had a few things to do before the leader's meeting and went on her way, Eric walked the other direction toward where his apartment was located, hoping to shower before heading to lunch.

11. Chapter 11

** Told you I'd make up for it with a longer chapter! Please let me know what you think!**

The cafeteria was loud and chaotic, but only there were only a few tables full. It seemed that the small groups spoke louder to compensate for the lack of crowds, she would only imagine how it would be for other meal times when the faction wasn't working.

Natalia smiled as she looked around. The people she saw were covered in tattoos and piercings, dressed in dark grays, reds, and blacks. Daniel and Mac had shown them a few of the main hallways that would take them to and from the training rooms and cafeteria.

Natalia hadn't eaten breakfast that morning, so she was excited to have a good meal finally. They sat down and she started digging in. She put a little bit of everything she saw on her plate. She normally was the one who made food for herself in Candor and had limited options; she wasn't a great cook. The past few months she had eaten with Matthew half of the time, he was a good cook, and his mother rarely was around, so he preferred to eat with her.

"Finally!" Callie said as she sat down with a girl Natalia didn't recognize, "someone who eats just as much as I do!" Natalia had her mouth full of green beans as she realized that Callie was talking about her. She attempted to smile and replied "I haven't had this much food in a long time!" but it sounded more like "I hrvt hdtsh mch ferd in lurngtin."

Matthew spoke up, after him and Andrew had only been conversing by themselves as they had made their way to the cafeteria, "she always eats like that, it drove my mother crazy."

The girl sitting with Callie laughed in a strange high-pitched way, causing the others to roar with laughter. Natalia glanced at the other tables while she ate, realizing that most of the transfers sat in groups together.

Her, Jacob, and Justin, Matthew, and Andrew were the only transfers that were sitting with Dauntless born. She noticed that a table in the corner of the large room sat Andrea, Eric, and a few others that Natalia didn't recognize.

She assumed they were authority figures as well, she wondered if Matthew knew and would have to ask him later on. Max was standing leaned over between where Eric and another man. She wondered what they were discussing but paid back attention to the conversation at her table.

Jacob, a Dauntless named Ashton, and Justin were arguing. Jacob had told them that being kind was more important than honesty. Justin disagreed and said that it was a stupid notion, and he was in the wrong faction if he believed it. Natalia had spent too much time with Nolan to disagree with Jacob's opinion entirely, she believed in white lies if it was for an excellent reason, but another side of her felt that bluntness was the way to go in most situations.

"Natalia, back me up here!" Justin said to her, "being kind is not more important than honesty!" Natalia sighed, "it depends on the situation. I don't think lying is a bad thing if it is for the right reasons." Jacob smiled, "see!" Andrew began laughing quietly, as she and Matthew had discussed this topic many times and he agreed with her, mostly.

Justin scowled at her, "I should have known not to rely on you in an argument. You spent more time with your little Erudite friends and hi.." she interrupted him, "who the fuck cares who I spent more time with?" she realized she had raised her voice a bit and caught the attention of a few surrounding tables. Andrew spoke up, "why did either of you choose to come here if you value those qualities so highly?" she asked them.

Jacob answered her first, "I believe that kindness is important, but I believe that bravery is more important. I want to protect people and be kind to them," he stated. Justin scoffed again, "and I choose the faction that the test told me to choose. I value honesty, but my results were Dauntless," he explained, "it would be dishonest to choose Candor when it is something I'm not!" he paused and narrowed his eyes at her. "Plus the only reason you are taking the hippy's side is because of your little boyfriend being Amity!" he exclaimed.

The entire table let out an "oooooh," as well as a few laughs. "That is not.." she started to explain but was interrupted. "Oh. My. God. You dated an Amity!?" Callie asked her loudly and nudged the girl beside her, "guess we know her type" she winked, and Natalia rolled her eyes. Matthew smirked at Natalia, and she gave him a nasty look, Andrew looked annoyed with the conversations turn.

"I transferred from Amity," the entire turned to see Andrea standing at the edge of the table. Everyone was silent for a moment until Jacob piped up, "Did you know my older brother? Jackson Montague? He may be around your age, not that I'm pointing out your age I just mean.. Well, you might know him?"

Andrea smiled at him, "yes he was a year ahead of me. He married Isabella Constance and has a son now if I'm not mistaken?" Jacob lit

up, "yes, Ethan. He turns six in a few months. It was hard to tell him I would be transferring." Andrea continued smiling at him, "I'm sure he will understand someday. We should continue this conversation later on; I agree with your opinion that it is important to remain kind while in Dauntless, but only if it does not get in the way of protecting someone," she told him. "Natalia and Matthew, can I steal you two for a bit?" she turned to face her.

Natalia jumped up, she felt her heart jump into her throat but acted as if she were relieved. "Anything to get away from them!" Matthew joked as he stood from the table. Exclamations of disagreement roared through the table as Andrea continued smiling at them all. Natalia told them she would find them later and followed her out of the cafeteria, noticing that most of the table the leaders had been sitting at had dispersed without her noticing.

As they walked Andrea pointed a few things out to them, explaining where she could find the tattoo parlor and a few small shops, as well as various other parts of the faction. Daniel had already explained most of them, but Natalia barely remembered them so she listening intently.

They followed Andrea through the cavernous hallways and up two stairwells. "Andrea, do you mind telling us where you are taking us?" Matthew asked politely. "To Max's office, he wanted to speak to you both before your training tomorrow." Natalia glanced at Matthew and gave him a knowing look. This had to be about their parents, probably some dumb speech about not being favored because they were leader's children. "Ce sera intéressant (this will be interesting)," Matthew whispered to her.

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"This is where the leadership offices are, this smaller one here is mine" Andrea pointed to the first one on the left. "Each leader has an assistant, so the offices have two or three rooms each," she explained. She continued down the hall; Natalia refrained from asking questions since she felt her nerves rise as they were close to Max's office.

Andrea opened a door toward the end of the hall and led her into a large room with three connecting doors. "Tina! How are you today?" Andrea asked pretty women who stood up as they walked in. Natalia glanced at her stomach; she had to be at least five months pregnant. "Oh you know, swollen feet, incredibly annoying cravings, everyone is annoying as shit," Tina replied to her. Andrea introduced them and explained that Tina was Max's assistant.

Tina smiled at Matthew, obviously recognizing him. She narrowed her eyes at Natalia, "is your last name Stephenson?" she asked. Natalia hid her scowl and nodded, Tina had a look of recognition on her face but said nothing, "Welcome to Dauntless!" she said exuberantly. Tina must have been a Candor transfer as well. "Don't bother knocking, they're waiting for you inside," she told Andrea.

Natalia's curiosity peaked at hearing "they" were waiting, as she had assumed they would be speaking to only Max. Andrea led her into one of the doors in the large room that led to what was Max's large

office. They had meant an annoyed looking Eric who was leaning against the window, a man she recognized but didn't know sitting in a chair in the corner near Eric, and Four who was seated in a chair across from Max at his desk.

"Tris is waiting for me; we have some things to do before dinner. I will update you tomorrow after the first part of training," Four told to Max and stood up. He walked toward to door and nodded to Natalia, "you two should get a good nights rest tonight, don't let the Dauntless-born keep you up. You've got a long day tomorrow."

After Four had exited, Andrea told her fellow leaders that Chris would be with them later as he was meeting his wife to tell them their son had stayed in Dauntless as expected.

Max stood and raised his hand to Matthew, "Matthew," Matthew nodded back to him. "Natalia, we've met once or twice before, but I am unsure if you've remembered." She shook his hand, "yes sir I remember," she told him and sat in the seat he motioned to next to her cousin. "I'm sure you have met Jackson, and of course, you already know Andrea and Eric." Max continued speaking while he put his elbows on his desk and looked at them, "I have to admit, I found it surprising when the two of you transferred to Dauntless." he paused as if waiting for a response.

"We are told not to speak of our aptitude results or the decisions we are to make," Matthew replied to him. Natalia knew this Matthew, the professional Matthew, the Jeanine Matthew's son Matthew, she turned into the same thing and hated it. They were both trained well in the art of respect and bullshitting.

Max smirked and glanced at Eric, who remained quiet with his fellow leaders, "well, your mother seems to be rather upset about it. She contacted us and said that you both made a mistake," he paused and looked at them, the smirk remaining on his face. "She said that you were upset about something or another and that the rules could be bent for you to go to Erudite if you so desire" he explained smugly, "do you think you made a mistake?"

Natalia couldn't contain her scoff, leave it to Jeanine to try to convince the other leaders to change the rules for her benefit. Matthew glared at her as she changed her expression to neutral, "I think we can all agree that my mother can be.. quite, controlling," he explained to the leader. "I assure you that we did not make a mistake. We chose to come to Dauntless," he told Max confidentially.

Max looked at Natalia and raised an eyebrow; she remained sitting up straight with her arms folded, her face expressionless as she looked back at him. "Well, then now that is settled. Natalia, your father, asked us to have you take care of these," he picked up a file off his desk and handed her a file.

"He said you must have been distracted when he asked you to sign them on your testing day," he explained to her. She turned to realize the file had the paperwork to have her medications transferred. She set it back down on the desk, breathing in and out through her nose to control the anger she felt spiking inside of her.

"Qu'Est-Ce que c'est? (what is it)" Matthew asked her. "Mon

mÃ©dicament transfert paperasse, je ne l'ai pas signÃ© (my medication transfer paperwork, I didn't sign it all)," she replied to him as Jackson cleared his throat. Natalia sighed, she had hoped that since she hadn't signed them, her father would have just let it be. "I didn't forget," she told him and crossed her arms again. Max raised his eyebrow and picked up the file, opening it he replied, "you didn't forget?" There was a pause Max glanced at Eric, "No sir," she replied again in the same voice.

Natalia heard Matthew sigh next to her. Max looked at the file and began speaking, "you signed this one, right here for... what is this?" he glanced up at her then to Eric and handed him the file. "Isn't that personal information?" she piped up. Damn it! Stupid inner Candor, she controlled it for the most part but everyone once in awhile she let it slip. Matthew would never let her hear the end of this.

Eric glared at her as he opened her file, "we're your leaders, nothing is private to us."

She felt herself turning red, "I haven't been taking them, but I still need the one I signed for every few days.." she explained to him before Eric could. Max began to reply but was interrupted by Eric "you haven't been taking it? Have you been taking any of these?" Matthew looked to her expecting the answer as well. "Natalia, quand avez-vous cessÃ© de les prendre? (when did you stop taking them)," he asked her quietly.

She ignored Eric's glare and her cousin's question, "I don't need them anymore, and I won't sign the papers" she told Max. Eric scoffed, "these were obviously prescribed for a reason!" he stated. "You're her cousin, do you think she should stop taking these?" he asked Matthew, he handed Max the folder. Max opened it and skimmed his eyes through the first few pages stopping on the last page.

"You punched your father in the face?" Max questioned her. Jackson laughed from his corner, obviously amused with the turn of conversation. Natalia sighed, "he deserved it." Chris laughed again, this time, he turned it into a cough when he realized Eric was glaring at him.

"My father agreed that he deserved it, the incident isn't even supposed to be in my file," she explained to him. Matthew spoke up, "if she hasn't been taking them, I didn't notice. Perhaps she doesn't need them anymore. They only put her on them when she was grieving for her brother." Natalia realized her jaw hurt from clenching it and began to bite the inside of her cheek instead.

Natalia remembered that night; it was about a month and a half after William died. Her father had said terrible things, and she had lost it. She had broken countless objects, and she had punched him in the face. The only reason she hadn't gotten in more trouble, and it as kept quiet, was because her father had told Jack he deserved it and recommended the medication instead. Jack agreed and told her that when you lose someone, you love, you do crazy things, things that you would likely regret later. She told him that she would never regret it. He had deserved it, and that was that. She never regretted it.

After a few weeks of hell and a few minor problems, she was put on

another medication, and once it began to work, she was assigned more classes in school with Matthew, as well as multiple extracurricular courses that were generally reserved for Erudite.

Matthew and her became close after that, which she was grateful for. She did have a rough time with her brother's death, and probably wouldn't be sane if Matthew hadn't been there for her.

Jeanine never questioned the innocent, nor the one a few weeks after, but that was something Natalia preferred to never think about. She preferred it that way, having privacy was near impossible living in Candor. For her, it had been easier since everyone knew she had an aptitude for Erudite and would transfer, but there was still a lot she would have rather kept private.

Max shook his head, "you don't think you need any of these medications, and you think you will do well in Dauntless?" he asked her. She paused for a long moment while choosing her words and Eric spoke up, "a Candor, who doesn't say every fucking thing on her mind," then replied sarcastically, "how refreshing!"

Natalia clenched her jaw again, "I belong here. I don't care if you don't believe it, or if my father doesn't, or my aunt, or anyone else" Max stared at her with a raised eyebrow, he didn't reply, so she continued, "I made my choice, isn't this my choice too?" Eric scoffed, and Natalia tensed again.

Max stood up, "Okay, then this is all settled. You are right if you feel otherwise you can go see Will in the infirmary, and he will have them on hand." That was it? Natalia was surprised. "Matthew I hope you will notify us if you think she needs them as well," she rolled her eyes, she didn't need him babysitting her. "She can be quite stubborn, I will notify you if I agree that she needs to be back on them," he replied to him and stood.

Natalia glared at him with an otherwise expressionless face; Matthew shook his head as if to tell her it wasn't the place to begin to argue again. Eric spoke again, "she should be taking the medications prescribed..." Max interrupted him "we can't force them down her throat Eric."

Eric scoffed again, "I'm sure I could find a way to." He smirked while he said it, in a menacing way that would probably scare the shit out of most people, but it just pissed Natalia off. She finally stood up and glared at him. She was about to open her mouth but was able to catch herself. He was a Dauntless leader; she would respect that. She had to keep her mouth shut. She felt Eric's eyes glaring into her soul and confirmed it by glancing at him without turning her head.

"You are both excused, take Four's advice and get a good night's sleep. I'm sure you will both do well in Dauntless," Max told them. She stared at him, she could read body language. The last sentence he said was a lie. She could tell by the way he and Eric shared glances, as well as the look on Jackson's face that none of them thought the two of them belonged in this faction. Matthew attempted to usher her out the door as she stared at their leader.

"I'm starting to believe you truly are the deaf initiate," Eric told her. She couldn't hold in her anger after that. Fuck being

respectful. "One of the most important things I learned living in Candor was how to read body language; you don't think either of us belong here," she paused as Max raised his eyebrow, his eyes slightly widening.

She continued, her jaw clenching as she spoke, "I don't care what you think, though. Honestly? I didn't choose Dauntless just because I know I belong here. Since my brother died, I haven't had a say in a single thing in my life. Had I gone to Erudite my entire life would have been planned. Matthew's would have been as well. Here I get a chance to choose, we both do."

"Natalia, enough," Matthew told her firmly but quietly and pushed her toward the door. He stopped when Eric walked to her and glared at her, inches away from her face, "you may be used to talking to the Candor leaders like that because of your daddy, and because they value you saying whatever the fuck comes to your mind, but this isn't Candor. You will speak to your leaders respectfully." Natalia could have sworn he snarled as he spoke to her. She heard Matthew curse under his breath, "fucking Natalia."

Her daddy? She hadn't asked to be called here, and she wouldn't be talked to like a child by a man who was only a few years her senior. Matthew could be the one who played nice, but she wouldn't. "I haven't said more than five sentences to my father in over a year, so perhaps you shouldn't accuse me of disrespecting anyone since that clearly wasn't my intention." Eric continued glaring at her; she could see in his eyes he was analyzing their entire conversation in his head.

She clenched her jaw again and turned to look at Max, who was smirking at them. "This conversation had been quite... Enlightening?" He walked around his desk, past both of them and opened the door. "Perhaps you two will fit into Dauntless quite well," he told her and motioned for them to exit. Another lie. He knew that she knew he was lying. She exited the office knowing that Eric was shooting daggers in her back, saying nothing further to them she heard Max shut the door behind her.

12. Chapter 12

Natalia let Matthew lead her toward the shops so they could meet up with their friends before dinner. As they walked silently, Natalia felt her annoyance and anger melt away, realizing that he was upset with her.

"I've never seen you disrespect authority like that..." Matthew said quietly as they walked, "not since the fight with your dad." He paused, slowing his walk he glanced at her, waiting for her response. When she didn't reply, he spoke again, stopped and grabbed her shoulders "we have to fit in here Natalia. Arguing with the leaders won't get us anywhere, especially when you snap for no good reason!"

"No good reason!" she exclaimed, "Matthew they agreed with your mother, that we don't belong here. They were going to try to break the rules and let us go back." He glared at her, "you think that? My mother would never, even for me. They were seeing how we would react" Natalia folded her arms and shook her head as he continued to speak,

"this won't be easy.."

"You think I don't know that?" Natalia asked him, still bothered. There was another short silence between them until he stopped again and shook his head, "did you really stop taking all of your medication?" She nodded, "I don't need.. "he interrupted her, "I trust you Natalia. You just have to promise me that if that changes, if anything changes, you have to tell me. Especially when the third stage starts." Natalia clenched her teeth, "I promise."

He looked at her for a few moments longer, she could tell he was worried. He had every right to be since William died. They began walking toward where the few parlors and shops. "Oh, also, please stop arguing with everyone," he told her. She rolled her eyes as they began to jokingly argue and then began to discuss their new friends. He then asked her questions about Justin and she told him what he knew, she asked about Andrew and he told her what he knew. He also told her to ask him herself.

They walked past a small group of Dauntless who glanced at her but continued. Suddenly a thought sparked into her head, she needed change, perhaps changing her appearance would be a good start. Were they even going in the right direction? "Do you even know where you are going Matty?" she asked him. He returned her question with a shrug.

Natalia turned to the small group she had just passed; they probably wouldn't help her, but it was worth a shot, "hey!" The four men turned around and looked at her, all but one turned away from her to walk away. He had a green mohawk and from what she could see down the hall, he was covered in piercings. "Where can we find the parlors? I need a haircut!" she yelled to him.

She waited for a moment for him to answer. "Turn left down that hallway," he pointed, "take the stairway, third door to the right, turn right, then turn left." Wow, he helped her.. "Thank you!" she yelled back to him and turned away quickly. "Good luck initiate!" she heard him yell to her again.

Matthew shook his head at her as they followed his directions, "you're going to cut your hair?" She nodded, "I may add some color to it too, perhaps green like our friend back there?" He scoffed, "I am NOT letting you do that! You shouldn't cut it too short either; it looks good the way it is." She smiled cheesily, "It'll look, and feel, even better when I cut a few inches off of it!"

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They found the hallway with parlors exactly where green mohawk guy had said. She walked into the shop advertised for what she needed and found a girl with purple and black streaked hair, with multiple piercings and tattoos sitting on a bench flipping through papers. She looked up at her and smirked, her black lipstick made her seem menacing.

"An initiate on the first night?" black lipstick girl questioned Natalia and glanced to her cousin. She folded her arms, "I need a change. Can you cut my hair?" The girls smirk grew, and she motioned

for her to sit in a chair to the left, "that's why I'm here. Want some dye too? What about you pretty boy?"

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Around an hour later Natalia's hair had been cut from almost her waist to her chest a few inches below her shoulders. She had kept her bright natural blonde on the top of her hair, but had opted for a dark burgundy underneath; you could only see it when you moved her hair or when tied up. She gaped at herself in the mirror, it was unbelievable how different someone good look with such a small change.

The girl, whose name ended up being Becki, told her she thought it looked great. Becki had talked the entire time about all sorts of things, so she and Matthew had learned a lot about her new faction. And a lot of people she didn't even know.

Becki had also told her that she transferred from Candor fifteen years previously, which explained the talking. Natalia had listened far more than she did talk, as per usual, but she had asked a few questions. They thanked her when they left, glad that the Dauntless she had met so far seemed.. Accepting? Becki told Matthew to "come back and play when he wanted to match his faction," to which he replied, "perhaps I will grow it out?" Natalia had rolled her eyes, she knew her cousin would attract more than just girls like Becki. She had glanced at him many time throughout her haircut.

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They walked to the tattoo parlor, hoping that they would be able to help her with a bit of change as well. She had never considered that she would ever be open to the idea of piercings, but she had wanted a few tattoos. Matthew obviously hadn't either, "do we really need to stop here now?" She told him that Mac had said they wanted to get tattoos later on so they might as well check.

It was nearly empty, except for one guy who introduced himself as BJ. He was tall with dark brown hair that was short on the sides and longer on top, he also had an eyebrow piercing and gauges. And he was extremely attractive, in a hot Dauntless man who had confidence oozing off of him kind of way. He had a similar reaction to initiates showing up at the tattoo parlor alone on transfer day before dinner, but seemed eager to help with whatever they needed.

BJ explained to them that sometimes the Dauntless-born would show up later on that night but usually not transfers. He asked her if she had just changed her hair, to which Natalia only nodded and introduced herself and Matthew, who asked how many people worked in the shop. "It's just B, Otto, Tori, Tris, and I." Tris? She glanced at Matthew; she remembered Four mentioning her name earlier; he did as well. BJ spoke up once Matthew began walking around the parlor looking at tattoo sketches, "so did you want to get anything to match your new hair?"

She smiled at him flirtatiously, "perhaps, what would you recommend?" They talked about options and he suggested avoiding any piercings

that could get in the way when training, but told her that all tattoo options were open. "What specific piercings might get in the way when I'm training?" Natalia asked him as they sat down. He smiled at her, "oh, you know, anything can be ripped out. Nose, lips, and eyebrows should probably all be avoided during your fighting stages."

Natalia could only imagine why hoping that she would learn quickly how to avoid getting hit altogether. BJ continued, "if you want a piercing there are ones that you can get that have a less likely chance of being hit. Tongue for instance, or even your belly button. That one is a higher risk but still less likely if you block well enough."

She considered them both for a moment as he continued, "or even.." he smiled charmingly again and looked at her chest, then back to her eyes. He shrugged and raised one of his eyebrows. She began laughing when she realized that he meant her nipples. She never even considered such a thing! He laughed with her, "you'd be surprised how common it is! I've got my left one done," he paused as she smiled more, "I'd be happy to show it to you" he told her flirtatiously.

Natalia rolled her eyes when she noticed Matthew glaring back at them, sick of her flirting since they'd gotten to Dauntless. She stopped laughing but remained smiling at him, "you Dauntless seem to work fast," she told him. He laughed, "Well, I don't get the chance to talk to such gorgeous girls often," he winked at her. She doubted it but he didn't seem to be lying. She felt her cheeks redden a bit but her stomach was rolling.

"How bad did it hurt?" she motioned toward his black shirt. "So you are considering it?" he asked her and paused, "it wasn't that bad. They only take a few weeks to heal. For women, it's usually quicker." Hmm.. interesting "Let's start with my tongue and go from there?" she told him.

Shortly later she had a snake bite piercing in her tongue, two in each of her ears (on top of her regular ear piercings they had been allowed in Candor) and one in her belly button. He told her to tape over her belly when training. The tongue would heal quicker than a standard tongue piercing since it was only a bar across the top rather than all the way through.

Natalia learned that when she tried to talk and began laughing when her words were slightly mumbled. He laughed with her, "don't worry you'll be able to talk to tomorrow. The swelling will go down, and it will only hurt a bit when you eat. It will be completely healed in around a week."

"You're going to regret that when you try to eat dinner," Matthew told her knowingly. BJ had handled Matthew's hovering well when she was getting her piercings. He had even told him he'd be back for a tattoo or two but no piercings, which surprised her. Natalia gave him a pouty look, "well thank god I only need food to stay alive," she told them. She was kind of enjoying herself. "So have you decided?" he asked her. She narrowed her eyes questioningly.

She smiled and rolled her eyes when she realized he was talking about nipple piercings again. "You just want my shirt off, don't you BJ?" she asked him flirtatiously. He smiled, his white teeth flashing this

time, "can you blame me?" She had been sitting in the piercing chair with him next to her; he was already quite close to her but when he spoke he had moved closer. Matthew stood up "alright Natalia; let's find your new friends."

BJ continued smiling as he stood up, "let me know after your training tomorrow when you want to come back for those tattoos man, I'll schedule you in whenever." Natalia suddenly heard people coming toward the room they were in so she turned her head to see who it was. "BJ! My man whats going on?" a group of three dauntless men walked in and toward where they were sitting. Natalia stood up, saying their goodbyes they began to walk past the Dauntless men as BJ returned their greeting. "Hey, Natalia! Come back with him tomorrow too?" She laughed and nodded, seeing Matthew roll his eyes.

End
file.